



# OCEAN PINES REPORT

*Your Connection*

TO THE OCEAN PINES, MARYLAND COMMUNITY

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## Daughter of Ocean Pines couple guiding next generation of space travel

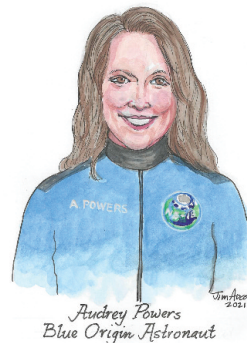
*Audrey Powers, vice president of New Shepard Mission & Flight Operations for Blue Origin, recently returned from suborbital spaceflight with Captain Kirk*

Ocean Pines residents Kevin and Linda Powers have a good claim to top parental bragging rights in the community.

Their daughter, Audrey Powers, is not only an influential attorney with the Blue Origin company, but she's also an accomplished aerospace engineer who recently took her first suborbital space flight.

The Powers family are originally from Columbia, Maryland. Prior to retiring in 2005, Kevin worked for the U.S. government and Linda was a teacher at the Garrison Forest School in Owings Mills.

Kevin and Linda bought a home in Ocean Pines, and moved to the community full time upon their retirement.



*Audrey Powers  
Blue Origin Astronaut*

### Aspiring astronaut

Kevin said his daughter had dreams of being an astronaut since she was 5 years old.

"She was always eager to go to the aerospace museum and look through a telescope and read about that stuff. She was somebody who loved physics and algebra and math, and she was a STEM person virtually from birth," he said. "She's had this in her mind for a long time."

On her love of all things space, Audrey

said, "It's probably easiest to blame that on my parents."

"I recall being interested in flying things from very early on, and I really liked math and science in school," she said. "Those were the subjects that interested me most, and as soon as I showed an interest my parents were always looking for an opportunity for me to go to cool summer camps, or to be involved in school activities that spoke to such things."

After high school, Audrey applied and was accepted at Purdue University in the aerospace engineering program.

"A lot of astronauts came out of Purdue, and it's a pretty well-known aeronautical engineering school," Kevin said. "When she finished at Purdue, she was offered a job at NASA on the space station side, and ultimately qualified as a flight controller for the space station. So, she did about 2,000 hours of work as a flight controller, which is a pretty highly responsible job with very strict qualifications," he said.

After working for NASA for several years, Audrey decided to go back to college, this time to law school.

"She came back east and (cont. on pg. 2)



(cont. from pg. 1) did some work for a private law firm. She also did a lot of debriefing of Cambodian refugees who were tortured by the regime, and did lot of interviews on a pro-bono basis of those people,” Kevin said. “And she helped write up some of the factual scenarios that led to the prosecution of some of the Cambodian communists.”

### Blue Origin and suborbital spaceflight

Audrey was next offered a job working for Blue Origin, a company founded by Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos with a mission of “enabling a future where millions of people are living and working in space for the benefit of Earth.”

The company develops partially and fully reusable launch vehicles purported to be safe and low cost, and that serve the needs of civil, commercial and defense customers.

“She worked in the general counsel’s office, and one of the things she was responsible for was getting the New Shepard [launch vehicle] certified by the FAA so it could carry passengers,” Kevin said.

New Shepard, according to Blue Origin, is a reusable suborbital rocket system designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Kármán line, which is the internationally recognized boundary of space.

Because of her ample flight training and background as an aeronautical engineer, she was also called by Blue Origin to join an experimental space flight in October.

Audrey said getting tapped for the mission was a case of being in the right place at the right time, and having the right training and preparation. She said the prior head of mission operations was retiring, and someone suggested her because of her background in flight operations as an engineer, and because she had already served in a leadership role at Blue Origin.

“It could not have been more surprising when they called me,” she said. “Blue Origin employees don’t have an expectation of flying. We don’t hire astronauts like NASA does, because we’re designing autonomous

vehicles and they don’t need pilots and commanders in the traditional sense. So, the fact that we ended up with an open seat on one of these early flights and that they asked an employee to go was very surprising.”

The flight crew also included Planet Labs co-founder Chris Boshuizen, co-founder of clinical research software platform Medidata Solutions Glen de Vries, and Star Trek’s Captain Kirk himself, actor William Shatner.

Dubbed “Blue Origin NS-18,” the mission launched from West Texas on Oct. 13 and lasted roughly 10 minutes.

Although brief, NS-18 is notable as just the second Blue Origin spaceflight with a human crew, and for officially making Shatner, now 90, the oldest person ever to travel to space.

Prior to the mission, Audrey said she “very much had this vision of the NASA astronaut and the professional astronaut who has to train for years and years before you can fly.”

“The New Shepherd experience is a very different type of human spaceflight,” she said. “Having worked on New Shepherd for eight years, we talked every aspect of this flight to death. I thought that I knew everything about it, but then experiencing it for real was still new and fresh and interesting in a lot of ways.

“As I was going through it, my internal dialog was like, ‘Oh, this is what it’s like. This is what we’ve been talking about for all those years.’ The sensory experience (cont. on pg. 4)



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(cont. from pg. 2) was pretty overwhelming, even though I had known about all these things for some time,” she added.

Adding to the surreal experience, among her three crew members was perhaps the most famous fictional space captain of all time. Ironically Shatner, or “Bill” as Audrey now knows him, was a calming influence and someone who helped put everything into perspective.

“I don’t know if it’s his age or his life experience, or maybe just being comfortable with people peppering him with questions and being in front of a camera, but he was so thoughtful at every step of the way, to kind of stop us and say, ‘Do you believe that we’re going through this?’ As the rest of us were fumbling around to try to find the words to explain what we’ve been through, he was a bit of a poet about it and very comforting,” she said.

Kevin was present for the launch and said it was a strange and “disorienting experience” watching his daughter go into space.

“The anxiety that you have watching your daughter sit on a 60-foot rocket that’s loaded with liquid hydrogen and blast off into space going three times the speed of sound, and then separate and float around above the Kármán line for four or five minutes, and then go through the anxiety of waiting to see the drogue chutes deploy and then the main chutes deploy – as a parent, it’s just very unnerving,” he said.

Kevin said the experience was also “disjointed,” because first you see things happening, and then “you hear it and you feel it.”

“The thing goes up so fast, that it’s just kind of breathtaking. In no time, probably 25 or 30 seconds, it’s going 350 miles an hour,” he said. “But she was really confident of the people at Blue Origin, because she had worked with them for so long, and they really have a great safety program. They’ve launched the same rocket 17 or 18 times.”

### The future of space travel

At this point in her career, Audrey said among her most fulfilling roles has been as a mentor for the next generation of potential astronauts. She is currently the vice president of

New Shepard Mission & Flight Operations for Blue Origin.

What the next wave of space travelers will look like going forward, she said, will be strikingly different from what the public has come to expect since the early days of the NASA program in the last century.

Audrey recently spoke with a Girl Scout troop, and said one of the questions that stood out came from a little girl who asked if they’ll ever need chefs in space.

“I was like, ‘Oh girl, I am with you! I do not want to eat that frozen astronaut ice cream that we used to get at the science museums,’” she said with a laugh. “I said, ‘Absolutely there are going to be needs for chefs in space.’ And then she turns to her brother and says, ‘See, I told you!’

“All of the ways that you can get into working in this industry, I felt like it was much more narrow when I was a kid,” she continued. “You had to be a technical person. You had to be an engineer or a very decorated fighter pilot to work in the space industry, let alone to be an astronaut. You pretty much had to devote your life to it.”

Blue Origin has flown 14 people in space this year, and none of them were professional astronauts, Audrey said.

“You also have SpaceX flying people who aren’t astronauts, and the same thing with Virgin, so it’s a really interesting time in the industry to look at this diverse group of people who have experienced spaceflight this year and just them being the complete opposite of everything that an astronaut always was,” she said.

Ultimately, Audrey said diversifying space travel and the access to space travel is one of the major goals of Blue Origin.

“If we can create a means to get people to space more easily and make that more inexpensive, then imagine what people will start doing up there,” she said. “You’ll have adventurers and you’ll have artists and you’ll have people of all sorts, in addition to the technical folks.

“I think there is no defined path to get you there anymore,” she continued. “If you enjoy spaceflight and are interested in that way, you can go do whatever else your interests might be and it can always lead a path to get you to space. So, I think it’s a really wonderful expansion of the industry that we’ve seen this year.”



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## 'Hero' bartender saved customer after heart attack

Quick thinking on the part of a local bartender – and a well-placed defibrillator – helped save a life on Oct. 31 at the Ocean Pines Clubhouse Bar and Grille.

A male patron, whose name was not publicly released, appeared to have a heart attack, when bartender Rob Ruszin and manager Judie Scotti swiftly sprang into action.

Scotti said she was coming back into the building at around 1 p.m. when she noticed a customer in distress.

"He was on the floor, and it sounded like he was having some breathing issues," she said. "Rob was on the phone with 911. They told him to roll [the man] on his back and then he handed me the phone."

Ruszin, who worked as a lifeguard for several summers and received defibrillator training while in college, tried to administer CPR. Scotti said that man started turning blue, was not breathing and did not have a heartbeat.

"I ran and grabbed the AED [Automated External Defibrillator] out of the hallway and ran back, and Rob hooked him up and followed the directions and shocked him," Scotti said. "At that point, Rob was doing CPR on him, and he started getting color back."

Ruszin said the whole incident, from the time the man slumped over until the time he used the defibrillator, lasted about two minutes.

"It felt like forever though!" he said. "[The defibrillators] really do save lives. It was nerve-racking, but the Fire Chief came and thanked us afterward. And throughout it, everyone stayed calm and worked together. Everyone helped out."

Soon after the resuscitation, EMS workers transported the man to TidalHealth, in Salisbury.

"I got an update that he was doing well in Salisbury, so I was very happy about that," Scotti said. "Rob did a great job. He was quick and responsive, as well as myself, but I feel like Rob did most of the work. Together, we made it work."

Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department Chief Steve Grunewald said the man was alert and responsive when EMS arrived. And Ruszin, he said, was a genuine hero.

"He saved the guy's life – there's no doubt in my mind whatsoever. He did a fantastic job," Grunewald said. "It was absolutely fantastic work in a stressful situation by the staff at the Clubhouse. Without the quick thinking of the bartender, the outcome could have been drastically different.

"It also speaks to the importance

of these AEDs in public buildings," he continued. "That AED just paid for itself. It saved that gentleman's life. But the big hero is the bartender – he stepped in and went beyond his normal job duties, and he saved this person's life."

Aquatics Director Kathleen Cook maintains defibrillators across all Ocean Pines facilities, and supplies information to staff on how to use them. That includes the Administration Building and Community Center, all five pools, all three restaurants, and the Golf Club, Marina and Racquet Sports Center.

Studies have shown that quick use of a defibrillator can drastically increase a person's chance of survival.

A National Institutes of Health report said the survival rate was 74% for victims who received their first defibrillation within three minutes, while those who received their first defibrillation after three minutes have a survival rate of just 49%.

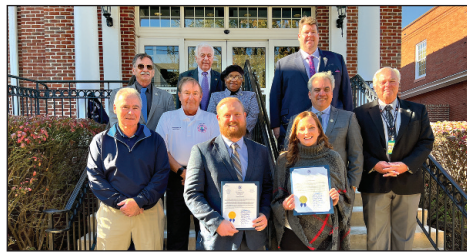
Additionally, an American Heart Association study showed that cardiac arrest victims who received a shock from a publicly available AED had far greater chance of survival and being discharged from the hospital (66.5%) than those who did not (43%).

Cook said she tests all the units monthly, and had checked the Clubhouse Bar and Grille defibrillator a week prior to the incident.

"I'm just thrilled that it was there and that it worked," she said. "[The defibrillator] would have never shocked him unless he needed it, so the guy was in trouble. So, hats off to Judie and Rob. They handled it flawlessly."

General Manager John Viola said he was proud of the team and gratified that their training and knowledge paid off.

"Their quick actions probably saved a life. As a resident, that's extremely comforting," he said. "We purchased defibrillators last year for all of our facilities, and many of our staff are trained to use them in case of an emergency. Going forward, that will continue to be a priority, and we'll ensure these devices are working and that our team members know how to use them."



Ruszin and Scotti were honored by the Worcester County Commissioners on Nov. 16.





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# Quilters by the Sea Guild of Ocean Pines continues giving ways

*Local group has made and donated more than 2,000 quilts*

Founded in 1985, the Quilters by the Sea Guild of Ocean Pines has grown from a small operation among friends and volunteers, to a busy, bustling branch whose love of quilting and giving spirit benefits an entire community.

Last year, the Quilters donated 451 handmade items to more than a dozen different organizations including Believe in Tomorrow, Coastal Hospice, the Cricket Center, Diakonia, and Women Supporting Women.

Jo Anne Donnelly, assistant volunteer coordinator, joined the group in 1996. She always enjoyed sewing and made her first quilt in 1986.

"The group was very small back then and we were very limited, time wise," she said. "We used to work out of the old community center and our volunteer day was only three hours."

Now, the Quilters meet for five hours every Wednesday in the Assateague Room of the Ocean Pines Community Center.

"We've really grown, and I've been very active since the very beginning in the volunteer day," Donnelly said. "That is something I've really enjoyed."

The Quilters host volunteer day on the first Wednesday of each month, when anyone can show up and work on items to be donated to local charities. Since 1986, the group has given away more than 2,000 quilts.

Second Wednesdays are "UFO" days, short for "unfinished objects," when the focus is on individual work and fellowship with other guild members. Third Wednesdays are for general business meetings, and fourth Wednesdays feature workshops and guest speakers.

"It's really very active and I enjoy all the different projects," Donnelly said. "Everybody is friendly and it's a great thing for people in Ocean Pines to do."

Donnelly's sister, Stephanie Dilworth, is the chief volunteer coordinator. She said among the items donated last year were 117 soft pillows that cover seatbelts, given to breast cancer survivors through Women Supporting Women.

Dilworth said the Quilters received a grant last year from Choptank Electric Cooperative for the Believe in Tomorrow Children's Foundation, an organization that helps young people with terminal illnesses. Those funds helped produce 39 quilts for the nonprofit, which is based in Ocean City.

"This year, the American Legion, Post #166, Ocean City, MD gave us a grant to make patriotic-themed quilts for veterans, and most of those are given to Coastal Hospice," she said. "They have a little ceremony when we give the quilts to them, and we've donated 10 so far, since we got the grant."

The guild also donates items to the Berlin Nursing Home, which houses about 15 veterans, Dilworth said. Other recent beneficiaries have included foster children through The

Cricket Center in Berlin, area homeless through Diakonia in Ocean City, and individuals and families struggling with addiction through Worcester Goes Purple.

"Every once in a while, we'll also do something special for a member who is sick, or the friend of a member, where we'll just make and give them quilts" Dilworth said.

"I like all the aspects of the guild, but the giving is very near and dear to my heart," she added.

Jacqui Santangelo is the current Quilters by the Sea president. She moved to Ocean Pines in 2017 and was previously active in a similar club in Pennsylvania.

Last year, Santangelo said the Quilters stayed active through Zoom meetings.

"Of course, we were sewing like mad, making masks," she said. "Everybody made hundreds and hundreds of masks for Mountaire Farms, because they didn't have enough masks. Some people also gave them to first responders, or anybody who requested them."

"That was a tough year, but we continued to make and donate quilts, and we stayed connected through little workshops," Santangelo added.

Resuming activities this year has also meant resuming the giving tradition.

Along with handmade items, Guild members this year donated canned goods to Diakonia and Sarah's Pantry, to help feed local children struggling with food insecurity, as well as toiletries to the Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health in Berlin. Quilters also donated more than 100 toys to Toys for Tots during a recent Christmas party.

"It feels good to give a little more," Santangelo said. "Not only are we keeping people warm with quilts, but we're giving them something to eat to warm their bellies, and we're helping out in any way we can."

The group also accepts monetary donations, as well as donations of materials.

"We need backings mostly, so that's larger yardage," Dilworth said. "It should be 100% cotton, and I don't turn down anything that's quilting related."

For more information about donating or joining Quilters by the Sea, email [qbsope@mail@gmail.com](mailto:qbsope@mail@gmail.com), attend any volunteer day (first Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.) in the Ocean Pines Community Center, or search "Quilters by the Sea Guild of Ocean Pines Maryland" on Facebook.



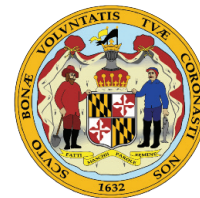




## Guest column: Focusing on session work in Annapolis

By Mary Beth Carozza

Maryland State Senator for District 38 – Somerset / Wicomico / Worcester Counties



As I begin my fourth session in the Maryland State Senate representing Ocean Pines and all of District 38, I truly am grateful for the opportunity to work and advocate for our shared Shore priorities.

Here in Ocean Pines, I have enjoyed being part of several community events, including the opening of the new Ocean Pines Chamber of Commerce, the Christmas tree lighting, and the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department dinner. These events highlight the hard work of our community, and the importance of safety as a top priority. On a personal note, seeing the many beautifully decorated houses with lights throughout Ocean Pines, including my mom and dad's home, always brings joy during this special time of year.

My great appreciation for our home community gives me energy and momentum to make our Shore voice heard in Annapolis. During the special session on redistricting held Dec. 6-9, I spoke on the Senate floor several times advocating for fair redistricting maps and urging my colleagues to join me in voting to sustain Gov. Hogan's public safety vetoes.

I supported the governor's nonpartisan Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission's redistricting map, which received an A rating from the Princeton Gerrymandering Project. Meanwhile, the majority in the Maryland General Assembly moved forward with the partisan Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission map, which received an F grade from this same organization. Under the partisan map, the new First Congressional District takes the Eastern Shore across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, diminishing Shore representation with the domination of Anne Arundel County suburbs.

Marylanders have made clear that they do NOT want gerrymandered maps and they want fair, equitable, and nonpartisan redistricting maps. With the override of the governor's veto and passage of the new congressional maps, we can now expect intense legal battles over the redistricting maps, with the courts having the final say.

During the special session in December, I also voted to sustain Gov. Hogan's public safety vetoes and joined my Senate Republican colleagues to petition to bring the governor's emergency crime bills to the Senate floor.

Public safety is job No. 1. With a violent crime crisis plaguing many parts of Maryland, I believe the legislature should take action now to protect Marylanders from re-

peat, violent offenders. Specifically, I strongly support the Judicial Transparency Act of 2021, which requires the publishing of sentencing records of judges in violent crime cases to hold the system more accountable to the public for sentencing decisions, and support the Violent Firearms Offender Act of 2021, which significantly increases sentences for those who repeatedly illegally carry firearms and for convicted gang members who illegally possess guns.

We are fortunate and proud that Ocean Pines consistently has been named the safest city in Maryland. I will continue to support anti-crime legislation and policies that support local law enforcement and fire/EMS personnel. Specifically, I am working with the community of Ocean Pines, the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department and Worcester County on plans for a new South Station in compliance with the national safety standards.

During the 2022 legislative session, I also will be focused on addressing the workforce shortages in every major industry including hospitality, health care, construction and public safety, and on supporting a full health and economic COVID-19 recovery.

I also will continue to support Gov. Hogan's retirement tax reduction proposals to keep and attract more retirees to stay and live here in Maryland. We in the legislature have an obligation to help make it more affordable to live, raise a family, start a business and retire here in Maryland.

Constituent service remains my top priority. You may share your views, concerns and ideas with me at [Marybeth.carozza@senate.state.md.us](mailto:Marybeth.carozza@senate.state.md.us). **May 2022 be a strong and healthy year for you and your family!**



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## ON THE FRONT COVER:

(top photo)  
 "Duckie Duck before sunrise"  
 Photography by Bob McKinley



## Guest column:

# Happy New Year from Annapolis!

**By Wayne Hartman**

*Maryland State Delegate for District 38C,  
 Wicomico & Worcester Counties*



I am writing this as the Maryland General Assembly has convened for a special session to vote on the redistricting map for our eight congressional districts. After the census every 10 years, congressional and state legislative districts are redrawn to reflect population changes within the state. Gov. Hogan has made it a priority for Maryland to eliminate the decades-long history of gerrymandering.

In the late '90s, Maryland was represented by four Republicans and four Democratic members of Congress. After the 2000 census, maps were redrawn that brought Maryland to being represented by six Democrats and two Republican members of Congress. This process after the 2010 census, under then-Gov. Martin O'Malley, resulted in Maryland having only one Republican and seven Democratic members of Congress. That brings us to the census of 2020.

As I mentioned earlier, Gov. Hogan made fair maps a priority in his tenure as governor. The governor assembled a group of citizens with equal representation of all parties to draw the districts. The outcome was a map the Princeton Gerrymandering Group gave an "A" rating for bipartisan representation.

In the meantime, the leadership in the General Assembly gathered a group of mostly Democrat-affiliated members, and they produced a map. That map received an "F" rating from the Princeton Group for bipartisan representation. During the four-day special session, the majority party selected the map drawn by their fellow Democratic leadership.

This map that the General Assembly is moving forward has the potential to eliminate all conservative representation for Maryland in Congress. As we all know, Maryland's rural areas are made up mostly of conservative voters, who deserve the right to be heard as well as every other voter in our state.

The map selected continues our history of extreme gerrymandering with districts made up by grabbing bits and pieces and in no way offers compact and contiguous districts. The governor's veto of this map will hopefully lead to a legal challenge that will finally bring fair and balanced representation to Maryland.

During the same special session of the General Assembly, many of the governor's vetoes were overturned by the majority party with the majority of the votes along party lines. Included in the veto overrides was a bill that will ban any Maryland county from working with ICE to house federal immigration detainees. Worcester County has the most to lose out of all the counties when this is implemented, as Worcester County once housed a large number of the state's federal immigration prisoners.

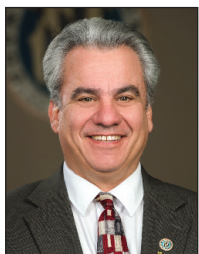
On a more local note, during the 2022 legislative session, I will be prioritizing the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department to help with funding the construction of a new firehouse.

With the holiday season here, it was great to participate in many of the area's Christmas parades. The parades are always fun and a great way to see so many people in the district.

As always, I enjoy hearing from you during session or anytime. Please remember my office as a resource whenever you are trying to work with any Maryland agency.

***Most importantly, I hope you enjoyed the holiday season and spent time with family and friends. Happy New Year to you and yours!***





## Guest column: Issues of the new year

By Chip Bertino *Worcester County Commissioner, Ocean Pines District*



I hope you enjoyed the holidays!

The dawn of a new year provides an opportunity to make you aware of some issues percolating at the county level.

Worcester County taxpayers generally, and the County Commissioners specifically, will be required to address the consequences of actions taken by the Maryland State Legislature that will impact directly the county budget.

From unfunded mandates to changes in law, our county will absorb millions of dollars of lost revenue while reckoning with increased expenditure mandates brought about by legislative actions.

During its emergency December session, the Maryland Senate and House of Delegates overrode a gubernatorial veto regarding ICE detainees. The result is that by October, Worcester County must end its contract with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) to house immigration-related detainees at the county detention facility. This decision, which affects only one other county in the state, will negatively impact our county revenue and could unfortunately require a reduction of staff at the jail facility. Regardless of your view on this issue, the reality is that Worcester County will have to respond to the state actions and address the impact to the budget.

Another issue on the horizon that could potentially cost us taxpayers millions of dollars is becoming compliant with new state legislature law enforcement reforms that require: body cameras be worn by all law enforcement officials; the creation of units within the State's Attorney's office and the Sheriff's office to collect, manage, store and collate tens of thousands of hours of video each year; and, the establishment of new, multiple law enforcement review panels. This is an evolving issue with many action points required by county officials. Equipment procurement as well as staff recruitment and training will require new and more robust resources and funding during the next couple years.

The mandates of the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education, known commonly as the Kirwan Commission, will directly impact taxpayers through the county budget. The commission's efforts to improve education in the state is worthy. Worcester County expects and deserves the very best schools possible. County and Board of Education leaders have for generations worked to make that so.

The reality is that state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding formulas that dictate how much counties pay for education places Worcester County at the top of the list for per-student funding, higher than Baltimore City, Montgomery, Prince George's and Harford. Additionally, the

annual, arbitrary MOE escalator formula requires county taxpayers to allocate millions of dollars additional to its education budget.

Further, the formulas used to determine what the state will allocate for new capital projects, such as school construction in our county, pales in significance to what is allocated to other counties. For example, the total construction cost for the new Showell Elementary School was roughly \$48 million. The state contributed only \$8.7 million, or about 18%. To put this in perspective, Wicomico and Somerset counties receive upwards of 80% of funding from the state for new school construction.

The implementation of Kirwan Commission mandates that include setting teacher salaries regardless of the local economy or demographics, will further exacerbate the challenges our county endures because of inequitable state funding formulas for Worcester County and will erode local control of one of our most valued assets, our school system.

The Kirwan Commission mandates are likely to impact the formulation of the next fiscal budget.

As I've mentioned in this space before, the County Commissioners are working with fire and EMS officials across the county to determine the future funding needs of the 10 fire/EMS districts across the county to ensure that when an emergency arises, when someone calls 911, trained and qualified personnel are available to arrive on scene with the necessary training, tools and equipment to assist those in distress. As it has been for the past several years, this issue will be an important part of budget deliberations.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 443-783-3248 or via email at [cbertino@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:cbertino@co.worcester.md.us).

***My best wishes for a safe and happy 2022!***

**Cindy Poremski**  
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# Ocean Pines hosts history panel

(Photos courtesy of Joe Reynolds / Ocean Pines Forum)



Ocean Pines hosted a “History Panel” discussion in October as part of ongoing efforts to document the community’s early days.

The event, organized by the Ocean Pines Public Relations and Marketing Department, was held Oct. 10 at the Community Center in conjunction with Worcester County History Week.

Longtime Ocean Pines residents Jack Barnes, Ed Moran, Gloria Richards, Alta Weiss and Sharyn O’Hare participated in the two-hour discussion, which was moderated by Jenny Cropper Rines. Rines previously chaired the 50th Anniversary Committee.

“I am so pleased that we were able to do the History Panel,” Rines said. “It was fun to hear stories of early Ocean Pines from the folks who lived it. It sounds like it was a neat place to be from the start.”

The panel discussion covered a wide range of topics, including the Ocean Pines campground, the real estate transfer between the Ocean Pines Association and Chase Manhattan Bank, the founding of the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines, and more.

Audience members also had the opportunity to ask questions and add comments, as well as to peruse old Ocean Pines photos and mementos.

“I think the guests enjoyed seeing the memorabilia that was displayed,” Rines said. “It was a two-hour session that could have flowed on all day!”

The video recording is archived in the history section of the Ocean Pines Academy, a virtual, self-paced civic education course about the Association.

The entire Ocean Pines Academy can be viewed at [www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/ocean-pines-academy](http://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/ocean-pines-academy).

In a separate series of interviews, all five panelists talked about what brought them to Ocean Pines, and their quintessential moments in the community they call home.

## Jack Barnes

Barnes was born in New London, Connecticut, where his father was stationed in the U.S. Coast Guard. But he considers Dallas, Pennsylvania as his hometown.

Barnes earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Wilkes University (then Wilkes College) in Pennsylvania. He worked for the Campbell Soup

Company, and later held positions with Federal Paper Board Company, Continental Can Company, State Equipment, and finally Morgan Stanley, where he finished his career as a financial consultant.

After living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for three decades,

he and his wife, Andrea, moved permanently to Ocean Pines in 2002.

“My parents had passed on shortly before and we had the Ocean Pines home they built in 1972 on the market for sale, but Andrea felt there were too many great memories associated with our trips to the Pines, so we canceled the sale, bought my sister out, did a little remodeling and decided Ocean Pines would be our retirement destination,” Barnes said. “And it was a great decision.”

Barnes is perhaps best known in the community for hosting the “Focus on the Pines” show produced by Joe Reynolds for the Ocean Pines Forum.

“I also was fortunate and proud to be involved with years of therapy dog work with collies King and Tobi in our local schools, nursing homes and the developmental center,” he said.

Barnes said one of his favorite memories in Ocean Pines happened during the 1970s, when he and Andrea were living in Pittsburgh with their two young sons.

“We decided we would maximize our vacation by leaving soon after work at around 6 p.m.,” he said. “We arrived in the Pines around 1:30 a.m. At the time there were few residents or street signs, and it was impossible to read in the dark and I got seriously lost. There was no GPS, no cell phone, and the only option was for Andrea to call my parents at about 2 a.m., and they somehow guided us to the house. We were both so tired the next day that most of that ‘extra’ time was spent sleeping.”

Another favorite recollection happened in 1968, when Barnes and his wife were driving on dirt roads behind his parents and a Boise Cascade salesperson.

“[The salesman] was touting the virtues of the Pines to my parents,” he said. “But all Andrea and I saw were signs stating ‘future home of Yacht Club’ and stories of a major highway that would eventually bisect the Pines and other hard-to-believe amenities, considering what we were currently seeing.”

“We looked at each other during the salesman’s various stops and just rolled our eyes,” Barnes continued. “It still amazes me that everything we heard eventually came to pass. Ocean Pines became a premiere community, and we were fortunate to have been part of that from the beginning.”

## Ed Moran

A native New Yorker, Moran attended St. John’s University in New York City and later served in the U. S. Air Force for five years. He retired from the New York Air National Guard as a colonel.

Moran worked for Chase



Bank for two decades and came to Ocean Pines in 1985, when Chase bought Merritt Savings Bank.

"I had just left Chase's real estate department and was hired as an independent contractor to deal primarily with the acquisitions in Ocean Pines," Moran said. "That included Maryland Marine Utilities, 800 acres of unplanted land, and several houses."

Moran played a key role in the negotiations with the Ocean Pines Board.

"The second turnover agreement involved most of the remaining lands that had not been turned over to the Association by Boise Cascade as it withdrew from the business," Moran said. "The lands that Chase ended up with were once owned by a California company that was financed by Merritt Savings Bank, who had foreclosed. When Chase took over, my charter was to get them sold but, in order to do that, I needed to deal with the Association, which was tied up by some of the cross holdings."

Moran said Ocean Pines wanted to expand the Yacht Club Marina at the time, but couldn't because Chase owned that land, as well as the area that's now private condominiums.

"OPA got the marina land and Chase retained the condo land, but agreed that there would not be building on it that would obscure the Yacht Club sightlines of the bridge. Chase wanted the lands across from the Yacht Club, but that's where the tennis courts were," he said.

"We swapped, so that the condos near Pines Point Marina could be built. And in return, they built the tennis courts where they now exist," Moran continued. "Chase also gave land along Route 90 to Choptank to build their transmission lines to replace the leaky buried ones that were causing frequent blackouts. Chase owned the land around the south lake and gave that access to OPA. There were also tradeoffs involving the areas that are now The Parke and Manklin Meadows."

Moran built a new home in Whitetail Sanctuary of Ocean Pines in 2003, where he and several generations of the family have spent their summers.

### Gloria Richards

Richards is originally from Chicago. She received a master's degree in art education, and taught elementary school in Chicago as well as in Salisbury, Maryland for 25 years.

The family was one of the first to move to Ocean Pines, in 1970, because Richards' husband worked for community architects Boise Cascade.

Richards is known for her decades of community involvement, including the cofounding of the Pine'er Craft Club and working with groups including the Boy Scouts of America and Women's Club of Ocean Pines.

"I also was the first editor of the Ocean Pines News. That started out basically as a newsletter, and Boise Cascade sent



it to people who had purchased property," she said. "We would write little things about what was happening, about the roads, and about the history."

Richards said Weiss later succeeded her in that role.

"Alta was into educational writing, and she was really a much better writer than I ever was, but I got it started," she said.

"But all of that was a community kind of thing. I think when you live here, part of the joy is having seen things grow," Richards continued. "I just sit back in amazement when I think that there was nothing here at first, other than Harry Wilkerson's [store], which is now Racetrack Auto."

Richards has fond memories of staying at the White Horse Park Campground during the early days, and later living on Ocean Parkway.

"And then we moved to Bay Colony, where we had our house and lived there until the last 15 years," she said. "Each section and each time period of my life here has brought on different memories and different friends. All of that is part of the experience of living here and becoming an Ocean Piner."

### Alta Weiss

Weiss moved from West Chester, Pennsylvania to Salisbury at age 6, when her father took a position teaching at Salisbury University, then known as Salisbury State Teacher's College. Her mother taught in the Wicomico County school system and was the first principal of Beaver Run Elementary School.



Following in her parents' footsteps, Weiss graduated from Washington College in 1964 with a degree in English and went on to teach the subject in high school for several years. She later worked with the Worcester County Board of Education as the leader of the Adult Education Program, and with the Maryland State Department of Education as a consultant.

Weiss and her husband, Fred, first came to Ocean Pines in 1968 with her parents, who had attended a sales pitch for the community.

"We advised them not to buy, because we felt the area might have problems with completing the vision for the property's development," she said. "Ironically, in 1969 we returned to Ocean Pines for the sales pitch via Beauchamp Road, since the North Gate hadn't been constructed yet, and bought 85 Sandyhook Road.

The couple then moved to Ocean Pines permanently in 1972.

"Our house was one of the first two-story homes, as Ocean Pines was being advertised as a 'retirement/vacation home' destination," she said. "Our impression of Ocean Pines had changed since our first visit with my parents, because property development was moving forward at a good pace."

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Weiss may be best known locally as the editor of the Ocean Pines newsletter, a position she held for 14 years.

"I also wrote a weekly column about Ocean Pines for the Eastern Shore Times," she said. "Fred is an original, charter member of the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, and I was a member of most of the clubs that developed in the formative years of Ocean Pines. I would consider our early participation in the development of Ocean Pines as a community and the newsletter my biggest accomplishment in Ocean Pines."

During those early days, Weiss fondly remembers taking their two daughters to swim at the Swim & Racquet Club.

"I would overhear the salespersons, who pointed out to the bay and explained to potential buyers that 'You have to use your imagination - a bridge (Route 90) will be built, and you can use that to get to Ocean City rather than taking Route 50.' The phrase, 'Use your imagination' was also part of most sales pitches for sections of Ocean Pines that were in the planning stages. There was a vision, and Boise Cascade, the original developer, did deliver on most of its promises," she said.

### Sharyn O'Hare

O'Hare was born on the south Side of Chicago. She attended Northern Illinois University for undergraduate studies and later St. Francis University in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where she earned a master's degree in education.

She moved to Ocean Pines in 1975 and gave birth to the first native Ocean Piner, Dan, a year later.

"It was the best move ever, and we never looked back," O'Hare said. "When we were moving out here, we didn't even know Ocean Pines existed. My husband was head of the Worcester Country School at the time, and I said, 'Find a place with trees and water.' So, of course we found Ocean Pines.

"Coming here, at that point, the Yacht Club was open and the pool was open. And I thought it was a wonderful place," O'Hare continued. "My first impression was very favorable. I had come from rural Indiana, so this was certainly a step up."

O'Hare said she's known locally for two things: selling real estate since 1979, and helping to found the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines.

"When we had the dedication for the memorial [in 2005] it was really special, very emotional, and very moving," she said. "I was hoping my father would live long enough to be here, but he did not. He knew it was being built, and he was a World War II veteran who turned 18 at Midway."

O'Hare said her father quit high school at 17 to enlist, which was common at the time.

"He was a true patriot, and that's one of the reasons I decided to do the memorial," she said.

Seeing the memorial today as an essential part of the county and a place that draws thousands each Veterans Day and Memorial Day "makes my heart sing," O'Hare said.

"The thing I love about Ocean Pines, is there are a lot of true patriots here," she said. "People here really care about our country, and that is really special."

Her other favorite memory, she said, was watching her children grow up in Ocean Pines.

"They grew up like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn," she said. "We lived on Crow's Nest Lane, which backed up to White Horse Park. And they grew up building tree houses and canoeing and kayaking and just running through the woods. Ocean Pines was always a great place to live."





## Guest column: The Worcester County Health Department wishes you happy, healthy holidays

*Programs and resources are available to boost your winter wellness*

### COVID and flu vaccines

Vaccinations for both COVID-19 and influenza are available through the Worcester County Health Department. An up-to-date list of clinic times, dates and locations can be found at [WorcesterHealth.org](http://WorcesterHealth.org). Appointments are recommended to reserve your vaccine, but walk-ups will be accommodated as vaccine supply allows. Please bring your ID and vaccination card. If you are registering for your booster shot, please indicate that you are getting your third dose.

If you need assistance, call 667-253-2140 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Winter wellness and mental health

- 1) Practice basic healthy hygiene and self-care: Get enough sleep, exercise and follow a healthy diet.
- 2) Don't take on too much. Be realistic with what you can and can't do. Don't overbook or over-plan yourself to a point that it will cause added stress.
- 3) Take a break from the business of the season. Listen to soothing music. Read a book. Spend time in nature. It may be chilly, but get out and take a walk.
- 4) Set boundaries and be okay saying "no." Sometimes you need to set healthy boundaries to take care of your own mental wellness.
- 5) Acknowledge and accept your feelings, and accept your needs. Be kind to yourself. Don't focus on the "shoulds." There is no way you "should" feel, or things you "should" do this time of year. The holidays feel different to everyone, and impact everyone differently.
- 6) Write a gratitude list and offer thanks.
- 7) Don't isolate yourself.
- 8) Volunteer or perform an act of kindness. Doing something kind for other people can lift your spirits.
- 9) Plan earlier, to avoid last-minute stressing.

### Preparing for winter weather

From the Centers for Disease Control: During extremely cold weather or winter storms, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Winter storms can bring cold temperatures, power failures, loss of communication services, and icy roads. To keep yourself and your loved ones safe, you should know how to prepare your home and your car before a winter storm hits.

You can visit [CDC.gov/disasters/winter](http://CDC.gov/disasters/winter) for more information and guides on how to create a winter storm plan.

### Prevention programs

#### Lifestyle Balance

Small changes often lead to major results, and the Worcester County Health Department's Lifestyle Balance: Diabetes Prevention Program is within your reach. The program aims to help residents eat healthy, be active and

lower their risk for Type 2 diabetes with easy-to-follow tips and tools. If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes or have a history of gestational diabetes, this program is proven to help you improve your eating habits, increase your daily activity, lose weight and reduce your chance of developing Type 2 diabetes.

#### Smoking cessation

To assist you in your attempt to quit smoking or vaping, check out the tips listed below:

- Make a firm commitment to quit and set a date.
- Join a smoking cessation class. For more information about classes, please call the Worcester County Health Department's Tobacco Program at 410-632-1100 ext. 1102.
- Join one of the physical activity and nutrition programs sponsored by the Worcester County Health Department such as the **Just Walk, Worcester Wellness Weigh**, or **Lifestyle Balance program**.

YOU can quit and have the power to become a non-smoker. Remember you don't have to stop smoking in one day. **Start** with one day. Classes are available in Snow Hill and in West OC. A full calendar is available at [WorcesterHealth.org](http://WorcesterHealth.org).

#### Worcester Wellness Weigh

The Worcester County Health Department is kicking off 2022 by offering new online classes through a program entitled Worcester Wellness Weigh (WWW). This program is supported by a grant from the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission. WWW is a free, technology-based, healthy lifestyle and weight loss program designed specifically for families who are ready to work together to lose weight, eat healthier, increase physical activity, and improve their overall health.

The online program is scheduled to begin on Jan. 10. Pre-registration is required to participate. Space is limited. For more information or to register, please contact Kelly Williams by email at [kelly.williams2@maryland.gov](mailto:kelly.williams2@maryland.gov).

#### COVID at-home test kits

The Worcester County Health Department is partnering with Worcester County Libraries and County Government to connect residents with COVID test kits that they can use at home. Kits are now available, while supplies last, at the Snow Hill, Pocomoke, Berlin, Ocean City, and Ocean Pines libraries.

"To protect public health, this service will be available via contactless pick up," Worcester County Library Director Jennifer Ranck said. "Patrons are asked to call the library, and we will place kits on a table outside with their names."





**Larry Perrone**  
OPA President

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022!

I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season. It was nice to be able to attend the various Christmas celebrations. It appears the community took full advantage this year, as evidenced by the Recreation and Parks Department's "Breakfast with Santa" and tree lighting ceremony at White Horse Park.

The Association's financials continue to improve month after month. We are now entering the months of the year that draw down on the excellent financial results attained through the first eight months of the year. The budgeting process for the 2022/2023 fiscal year is well underway, with the Budget & Finance Advisory Committee hearings scheduled for the first week of January and the Board of Directors hearings scheduled the week of Jan. 17.

The Board recently became aware of potential legislation that would require all HOAs in Maryland to conduct a depreciation/reserve study and to comply with the recommendation of the study. The purpose would be to ensure that our Association has sufficient reserves. You may remember the building collapse that occurred in Florida. That collapse and condition of that condo association's reserves appear to be the motivating factor of the legislation. The legislation was introduced into the Maryland Assembly last year, but did not pass. We are expecting the bill to be reintroduced this coming legislative session.

Fortunately, OPA did a reserve study about three years ago, and we just had it updated after all the recent infrastructure changes in the community. We are in compliance halfway. We don't know what the bill will require in regard to reserve adequacy, at this point. This legislation will not have an impact on the upcoming budget, but it may impact the 2023/2024 budget. We will be monitoring the legislation to see what happens.

I would like to thank the over 1,800 respondents to the community survey conducted by the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee. The survey was well done and was assisted by the Communications Advisory Committee and the OPA staff. The survey results provide credible information for this Board and future Boards to consider as they make decisions for the community. The most important item to community members is SAFETY. I agree. Thankfully, our community yearly is listed as the safest community in Maryland and one of the safest in the country. This is a great compliment to the Ocean Pines Police force and our residents.

*On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022.*

## Questions? Concerns?



**EMAIL**  
**info@oceanpines.org**



**CALL**  
**410.641.7717**

After hours, call Ocean Pines Police at 410.641.7747.



## Ocean Pines Association BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The OPA is governed by a 7-member Board of Directors elected by the lot owners who make up the membership in the homeowners association.

Seven elected Directors (4 officers, 3 Directors at-large); unpaid positions. Members are elected for 3-year terms (can run for a 2nd consecutive term).

Board officers are chosen at the Organizational Meeting held within 2 weeks of Association's Annual Meeting.

Email: [directors@oceanpines.org](mailto:directors@oceanpines.org)



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**GENERAL MANAGER**

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## Meet new OPA Board members Amy Peck and Josette Wheatley

**O**cean Pines welcomed two new Board members in October, with the appointment of Amy Peck and Josette Wheatley.

Both will serve until the 2022 election.

### Amy Peck

Peck described herself as a “Baltimore girl who grew up vacationing in Ocean City.”

“I worked my way through college working ‘down the ocean’ and have fond memories of working at Phillips North,” she said.

Years later, she and her family bought a home in Ocean Pines.

“Once my kids started public school in Baltimore County, we made the wise choice of buying a home here in 2002,”

she said. “We were looking for a summer home where my young sons and I could live when school wasn’t in session, and we just fell in love with Ocean Pines and all that it offers.”

Before retiring, Peck worked as an early childhood educator, running her own licensed daycare center, and working with Baltimore County Parks and Recreation as a teacher and

director for their Tiny Tots program.

“My husband continues his career as a scientist with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers,” she said. “My sons attended Baltimore County Public Schools and received full tuition scholarships to Towson University and UMBC, and the oldest will receive his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Duke.”

Prior to moving to Ocean Pines, Peck earned HOA experience while serving as the association secretary of the Pine Valley Valleywood Community Association in Timonium. She also started the Greater Timonium Community Council, worked with land preservation groups in Northern Baltimore County, and volunteered with the Cromwell Valley and Baltimore County recreation and parks departments.

Peck said she brings a unique perspective to the Ocean Pines Board, because of her varied background.

“I have been a part-time resident, a resident with young children, an empty nester, a retiree now almost full-time here, and an employee,” she said. “Many residents come up to me saying, ‘I know you from somewhere,’ and it is usually from the pools. Before being appointed, I loved working the front desk for Aquatics in the summers and spreading my love for what this community offers.”

She’s also a familiar face in Ocean Pines politics, as

someone who frequently attended Board meetings and often wrote letters to the Association’s governing body.

“My approach to something I don’t understand is to research it endlessly,” Peck said. “When I first heard about effluent being used to irrigate, that’s what I did – I researched and I asked any expert I could find questions.”

On the Board, Peck will serve as liaison to two advisory committees: Racquet Sports and Environment and Natural Assets.

“I’m super excited to be liaison for the Environment and Natural Assets Committee,” she said. “It’s been a pleasure talking with members of the committee who share the same passion for the environment that I do.”

“I will also serve as liaison for Racquet Sports,” she continued. “Our Racquet Center, certified instructors, and state-of-the-art courts are the best on the East Coast. The investment Ocean Pines has made in pickleball is paying off.”

Looking forward as a new Ocean Pines Board member, Peck described herself as being fiscally conversative, but not afraid to invest in the future.

“I see the value in investing money to improve our amenities and the customer experience, and in the end the growth in revenue that that investment gives us. I take that same approach with maintaining our current facilities,” she said.

“During the next nine months, I am focusing on continuing our positive revenue growth and improving communication with the homeowners,” Peck continued. “I’m excited to work together as a team to continue projects in place but also I like to look forward long-range keeping in mind the 50-year history of Ocean Pines. I’ve often been called the ‘cheerleader’ of Ocean Pines, because I’m very vocal about how much I love it and how much there is to do. I’m going to do my best to serve.”

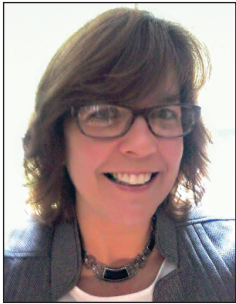
### Josette Wheatley

Wheatley is originally from Moncton, a city in south-eastern New Brunswick, Canada.

She and her husband, Bob, raised four children in Howard County, Maryland before moving to Ocean Pines full time in 2019.

The family purchased a home in the community in 2014 to be closer to family. Wheatley said her in-laws live next door and have been homeowners since 1996.

Wheatley’s professional background includes 25 years in civil engineering, with much of that time



spent as a Maryland State Highway consultant working for an engineering firm in Ellicott City. Today, she runs American Engineering Solutions, which is certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation as a woman-owned small business.

"My husband and I have been business owners for the past eight years, providing drafting services for new home construction and renovation plans, including permitting for both residential and commercial projects within Maryland, Delaware and Washington, D.C.," she said. "My experience includes storm water management, roundabouts, and bridge and road designs," she said.

Since moving to Ocean Pines, Wheatley has been an active volunteer. She previously served on both the 50th Anniversary Committee, and the Communications Advisory Committee, where she served as the committee secretary.

"I have learned that the committees are the pulse of our community, and the people who volunteer are passionate in our success," she said. "In the past, I was president for my homeowner's association in Howard County for four years. During those years, we worked on creating a financial reserve for our aging infrastructure. I also served as a liaison of CERN, a community emergency response network, which worked closely with our communities."

As an Ocean Pines Board member, Wheatley hopes to be a unifying force. She will serve as the Association Secretary, and the liaison to the Communications and Elections committees.

"My focus for this year is to help bring the Board of Directors together and to meet the needs of the community," she said. "I intend to listen to the community and get their voices heard. This includes the drainage issue - as it affects so many of our neighbors - as well as the proposed North Gate roundabout, and the environmental impact on our ponds, canals and our overall water quality.

"Promoting our community is also a top priority," she continued. "We live in an amazing part of the world, where the beauty is impeccable and so are the people who live here."

"Everyone has to do their part in order for it to be successful. It's not just one person over another person, but it's everyone working together," she said. "I think we all also respect each other. We all have our moments of frustration, but then you get over it and you figure out how to fix it."

## 2021 Board Election Update

At the time this publication went to print, a judge's decision about the eligibility of Ocean Pines Board of Directors candidate Richard Farr had not been rendered.



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**John Viola**  
General Manager

## A BRIGHT SEASON AHEAD

As the calendar year comes to a close, the proposed budget has become a major focus of our operations.

Our budget process starts each year in the fall. The Budget and Finance Committee provides its guidance to the GM, and department heads are asked to craft their budgets using a bottoms-up approach.

I have met and reviewed proposed budgets with each department head, and our next step is public review sessions with the committee and then the Board of Directors, in January. Along with the GM review, the Finance team is heavily involved in the entire process.

This year, the "DMA Lite" reserve study will also factor in the budget. Public Works Office Manager Linda Martin helped lead that effort, and the Budget and Finance Committee signed off on the updated study during a work session in November.

Headwinds affecting the budget this year include inflation, mandatory minimum wage increases, mark to market wage adjustments needed to be competitive, proposed legislation on homeowner's association reserves, and rising insurance costs.

Tailwinds include the improved performance across amenities and efficiencies in the departments, and a current and prior year realized budget surplus.

Over the holidays, our Recreation and Parks Department again helped produce a series of Christmas events for our residents, including a well-attended Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Public Relations and Marketing put together the Light Up the Pines event, and our Fire Department escorted Santa through the community on Dec. 17.

Looking at our amenities, Aquatics continued to host new and returning programs in December, including Hydrorider and water aerobics. Aquatics has produced strong financial results this fiscal year and is among the top performers in favorability to budget.

Our Racquet Sports amenity had a successful fall, including several major tournaments, and we're looking forward to completing four new pickleball courts by the end of May.

The Yacht Club, Beach Club and Clubhouse Bar and Grille have all been favorable to budget so far this fiscal year, and the Yacht Club wrapped up 2021 with a sold-out New Year's Eve event featuring Tranzfusion.

Golf operations are also favorable to budget, and, like Racquet Sports, hosted multiple successful tournaments in the fall. Credit to Course Superintendent Justin Hartshorne and his team for helping produce excellent course conditions this year, which many people have taken notice of.

Public Works has been involved in several key projects, including water quality improvements at Bainbridge Park and improvements at the North Gate Bridge. Public Works will oversee the next phase of bulkhead work, to include Pintail Park and homes on the north side of Pintail Drive.

Finally, our Police Department continues to receive state and national acclaim for helping to make Ocean Pines one of the safest communities in the United States.

I also want to recognize all our departments and staff for taking part in holiday giving initiatives this year, including donating meals to local families through Diakonia, the Angel Tree program, and helping to collect children's letters to Santa. All your efforts helped make the holiday season brighter for our wonderful community.

**VISION:** Ocean Pines will be a premier resort community, offering exceptional value & quality of life to property owners who are diverse in age, economic status & interests.

**MISSION:** Provide the governance, administration, facilities, services & amenities that are necessary to make Ocean Pines an attractive, affordable, safe & enjoyable place to live & work.

.....

**The Ocean Pines Association  
will observe the following  
upcoming holidays.**

**Please note that Ocean Pines  
administrative offices will be closed for:**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** Mon, Jan. 17

**Presidents Day:** Mon, Feb. 15

## **Ocean Pines MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT**

*Responsible for promoting Ocean Pines' amenities, as well as establishing and maintaining the Association website, cable access channels, and serving as the staff liaison to the local media.*

### **Marketing & Public Relations Director**

**Josh Davis**

443.366.1844

[jdavis@oceanpines.org](mailto:jdavis@oceanpines.org)

### **Marketing Coordinator** **Julie Malinowski**

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## OPA Board members honor Bennett



Ocean Pines Board members on Dec. 11 honored retiring Senior Executive Assistant Michelle Bennett.

During a regular Board meeting, Association President Larry Perrone thanked Bennett for her hard work and dedication over the last decade.

Bennett would have celebrated her tenth year with Ocean Pines in April. She officially resigned on Nov. 30.

"Unfortunately, Michelle Bennett ... has tendered her resignation," Perrone said. "Most people probably don't know, but Michelle works very closely with the Board in addition to working directly for the general manager, so we have a little something for Michelle."

Perrone presented Bennett with a thank you plaque, and Board members posed for a photo with her.

General Manager John Viola released a statement about Bennett's resignation on Dec. 3.

"I am writing to you all today to announce the resignation of Michelle Bennett, effective Dec. 28, 2021. Michelle has been a trusted, highly valued member of Ocean Pines Association for almost 10 years and has provided the General Manager's Office and the Board of Directors with excellent service. She has received an employment opportunity that will enable her to utilize her accounting experience fully," Viola said. "Michelle has been a great asset to Ocean Pines Association and will be missed very much. Please join me in wishing the very best to Michelle in her new career endeavor."

Bennett also released a brief statement.

"I am excited to join a local private family-owned business, where I will utilize my accounting experience fully," she said. "I have enjoyed serving the Ocean Pines community for almost 10 years and will miss working with the team."

## Work for Ocean Pines!

Ocean Pines Association currently has the following positions open:

**Senior Executive Assistant - Full-Time**  
**Full-Time Lifeguard • Part-Time Lifeguard**

**Seasonal Public Works Laborer**

**Part-Time Front Desk Clerk**  
*Assessments/Membership*

**Seasonal Golf Maintenance Laborer**  
*Accepting Applications for the Spring*

Learn more at <https://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/work-here>, or email [hr@oceanpines.org](mailto:hr@oceanpines.org) for more info

## OPA holiday drive benefits Diakonia

Ocean Pines staff in December sent holiday meals for 10 local families to Diakonia, a 501(C)(3) nonprofit that has been supplying services to the homeless for nearly 50 years.

The staff collection sent 10 turkeys, plus instant mashed potatoes, stuffing, macaroni and cheese, gravy, green beans, corn, brownies, cake mix and other items to Diakonia as part of the Association's annual holiday giving initiative. The Matt Ortt Companies also contributed food items.

Diakonia Executive Director Bee Miller said the organization is always busy during the holiday season. The nonprofit serves about 200 local people each year through its shelter, plus an additional 200 families each month through its food pantry.

"Food drives this time of year are tremendous for us. We're getting loaded with food, which is great because nobody leaves without a full trunk of food," she said. "And the Ocean Pines donation made sure that 10 more families will go away with a full trunk of food."

Other needed items include peanut butter and jelly, Miller said, "because it stretches a long way."

"If we have street homeless, we try to make bag lunches or just peanut butter and jelly sandwiches that we can give out to people on the street," she said.

The nonprofit is also asking for twin bedsheets.

"Anybody who goes to our shelter, we allow them to take bedding with them when they move into their own place, so there's always a need," Miller said.

Miller said monetary donations are also helpful, because they help fill gaps in between services.

"What a lot of people don't know is, all the financial donations we get are considered matching funds for the grants we go after as well," she said. "So, with every dollar that's given, we can double or triple it."

Diakonia programs include Supportive Services for veterans and their families serving Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties; Homeless Solutions that helps with rent and utilities for eligible households serving Wicomico and Worcester counties; Rapid Rehousing serving Wicomico and Worcester counties; and Emergency Rental Assistance for those affected by COVID-19 in Worcester County.

To donate, call 410-213-0923, or donate online at [www.diakoniaoc.org](http://www.diakoniaoc.org).







## HIGH-DEMAND CLASSES

Aquatics hosted a successful Pathfinders for Autism event on Dec. 11, and we had a partnership with volunteer members of the Stephen Decatur High School Swim Team that came in as “swim buddies” to interact as a part of the event. Near to my heart, we continued our Angel Tree program this year, collecting Christmas gifts for local families in need. As always, the Aquatics community was so generous. Our angels were gone in one day, and people even returned with additional gifts and food donations.

Because of high demand, Aquatics recently added three new hydrocycles. Hydorider classes continue to be successful for us, and classes are scheduled Mondays and Wednesdays and Tuesdays and Thursdays, throughout the winter and spring. Call the Sports Core Pool at 410-641-5255 for more information.

We're now getting ready to hold pool operator classes, to keep us in compliance during the summer. We'll hold lifeguard recertification classes over Christmas break, and we've already scheduled a lifeguard class in April to try to attract new guards. Again, please call the Sports Core Pool at 410-641-5255 for more information.

Following the heroic lifesaving efforts of Rob and Judie at the Clubhouse Grille, we've held CPR certification classes for staff, and General Manager John Viola has been instrumental in getting us additional AEDs for our facilities.

*We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you in our pools next spring and summer!*

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Closed Feb. 28-March 4 (semi-annual cleaning & draining)

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### EARLY BIRD LAP SWIM

(M-F, 6:00-7:50am) DATES: Jan 3-Feb 11, Feb 14-Apr 1

### AQUA YOGA (W, F, 7:20am-7:50am OR 8:00am-8:45am)

DATES: thru Jan 21, Feb 2-Mar 18, Mar 30-May 6

### SHALLOW & DEEP WATER SWIMMIN WIMMIN

(M, W, F, 8:00am-8:50am)

DATES: thru Jan 14, Jan 17-Feb 25, Mar 7-Apr 15

### WET WORKS I (M, W, F, 9:30am-10:20am)

DATES: thru Jan 21, Jan 31-Mar 18, Mar 28-May 6

### WET WORKS II (Tu, Th, 9:30am-10:20am)

DATES: thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 29-May 5

### CREAKY JOINTS I (M, W, F, 11:00am-11:50am)

DATES: thru Jan 21, Jan 31-Mar 18, Mar 28-May 6

### CREAKY JOINTS II (Tu, Th, 11:00am-11:50am)

DATES: thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 29-May 5

### SHAPE UPS (Tu, Th, 8:00am-8:50am)

DATES: thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 29-May 5

### TOTAL BODY FITNESS I (M, W, F, 10:00-10:45am)

DATES: thru Jan 21, Jan 31-Mar 18, Mar 28-May 6

### TOTAL BODY FITNESS II (Tu, Th, 9:00am-9:45am)

DATES: thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 28-May 5

### AQUA CROSS TRAINING (Tu, Th, 7:00am-7:45am)

DATES: Jan 11-Feb 17, Mar 8-Apr 14

### BOOT CAMP (M, W, F, 6:00-6:45pm)

DATES: thru Jan 21, Feb 7-Mar 25

### WATER AEROBICS (Tu, Th, 5:15pm-6:00pm)

DATES: thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17

### HYDRORIDER CLASSES

(M, W, 9:00am-9:40am) Jan 31-Mar 9

(Tu, Th, 9:00am-9:45am) thru Jan 27, Feb 8-Mar 24

(Tu, Th, 10:00-10:35am) thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 29-May 5

(Tu, Th, 6:00-6:45pm) thru Jan 20, Feb 1-Mar 17, Mar 29-May 5



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## McNult honored by OPTC

John McNult was recently honored at a meeting of the Ocean Pines Tennis Club (OPTC) Steering Committee. The meeting was his last as the committee's chairperson.

## OPA tennis pro receives 'Grow the Game' grant

Ocean Pines Racquet Center Head Tennis Professional Terry Underkoffler was recently awarded \$876 by the United States Tennis Association Mid-Atlantic Region.

The grant was given for the efforts by Racquet Center teaching staff last summer, which both attracted new players and enticed existing players to seek tennis instruction.

"The Grow the Game grant is a recognition and reward for organizations that are offering entry-level tennis programs aimed at new and returning players," Underkoffler said. "It was a competitive grant that organizations had to meet specific criteria to receive the award."

Underkoffler and his staff trained more than 80 junior and adult players in a variety of formats last summer. All the Ocean Pines instructors are professionally licensed to teach the skills of the game and return people to play in a safe and welcoming environment.

The Ocean Pines Racquet Center is a USTA-recognized site that offers play and instruction all year around.

For more information, visit <https://www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/racquet-sports>.



## Pickleball tournament nets \$17,000 for American Cancer Society

The Ocean Pines Pickleball Club helped raise more than \$17,000 for the American Cancer Society during the fourth annual Pickleball Pink Ribbon Classic, held Oct. 1 at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center.

Nearly 100 players on 12 courts participated during the event, and three dozen players received gold, silver, and bronze medals. The event also featured 27 volunteers, 22 sponsors, and 51 additional donations.

"The Ocean Pines Pickleball Club worked very hard on organizing this event. With 96 players and many levels, we had to carefully group the brackets to make the best fit possible," Tournament Director Chris Shook said. "We also could not have asked for a more beautiful day. The weather was definitely on our side."

Shook also credited tournament sponsors and volunteers. "Once again, Chick-fil-A came through by providing the players with a delicious lunch. Wockenfuss provided chocolates, and we even had homemade cookies in the players' boxed lunches, and Southside Deli provided a platter of subs to help keep the volunteers going throughout the day," she said. "The volunteers worked very hard and did a wonderful job keeping the event running smoothly."

"Overall, it was a great event and a fun day for a great cause," Shook continued. "Our request for those who read this: please have all of your screenings completed! Early detection saves lives, so don't be afraid of 'E.D.'"

To learn more about the American Cancer Society, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call 1-800-227-2345.

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**John Malinowski**  
General Manager  
of Golf

## PREPPING FOR NEXT SEASON

This past golf season was busy for the course, which saw increased play, record participation in junior golf camps, and much improved course conditions. Now we enter into course recovery and preparations for next season.

As in past off-seasons, we are continually working to combat the changing characteristics caused by the growth of the community surrounding

the course over the past 53 years. As the trees get taller and thicker each year, sunlight and airflow are negatively affected. Throughout the winter we will continue to limb-up the overgrown trees that border the fairways of the course, which will help with some of the airflow and sunlight issues and increase the playability of these holes.

Likewise, as homes have been built bordering the course, stormwater runoff and drainage have been affected. These changes through the years provide constant agronomic challenges that we continually work to overcome. To help alleviate some of these challenges, our maintenance crew has

also been installing new drain lines in heavily affected areas.

We also took advantage of the warm weather through the first week of December and were able to do an extra aeration of the greens using Ninja Tines, which helped in the removal of the layer of organic material two inches below the surface. This work will continue to allow roots to go deeper and stay healthier under the stress of the summer season and help with drainage. The holes created by the Ninja Tines were so small that they did not affect playability of the greens and the results have already helped. We are planning to start again in March to continue the removal of the layer.

Our winter rates for Ocean Pines residents are \$30 for 18 holes and \$20 for 9 holes, so now is a great time to come out and play.

*Looking forward to seeing you all on the course in 2022!*

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## OPMGA crowns match play champion

Craig Binetti bested Lou Goffredi on Sept. 30 with two holes remaining to win the 2021 Ocean Pines Men's Golf Association Match Play Championship.

Twenty-two Men's Golf Association members participated in the match play that began in June and involved 43 individual pairings throughout the summer. Sixteen of the 22 played in three or more matches, and six players played in five or more.

Binetti, Goffredi and Walt Lischak paired up during the last couple of weeks in a variety of ways before a champion was determined. Binetti eliminated Lischak in the eighth round. Goffredi gave Binetti his only defeat in the ninth round, and Binetti closed out the tournament with his win in the tenth round.

Connie Wachter secured fourth place in the double-elimination tournament when he was eliminated in the sixth round of matches in early September.



## Ocean Pines Golf Association donates to AGH

On Nov. 12, members of the Ocean Pines Men's and Ladies' Golf Associations joined Atlantic General leadership and staff to present a generous donation of \$2,367 to the Eunice Q. Sorin Women's Diagnostic Center.

The annual Pink Lady Golf Tournament raises funds to provide women of the Eastern Shore community with crucial healthcare services, such as mammograms, especially for those who may not be able to afford these lifesaving screenings. Over the last 11 years, their contributions have totaled over \$16,000.

The Eunice Q. Sorin Women's Diagnostic Center has been designated a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology, and it is community support such as that shown by the Ocean Pines Golf Associations that allows Atlantic General to continue providing the accessible, high-quality care they are known for.

## OPLGA hosts Club Championship and Governors' Cup tournament

The Ocean Pines Ladies Golf Association held its annual Club Championship and Governors' Cup tournament on Sept. 20 and 21.

The Club Championship is an 18-hole, low-gross stroke-play event, and the Governors' Cup is a one-day, nine-hole, low-net stroke-play event.

The overall low-gross OPLGA Club Champion, playing beautiful golf two days in a row, was Chung Cho.

The first flight, first low-gross winner was Susan Morris, and the second low-gross winner was Geri Fasulo.

The second flight, first low-gross winner was Norma Kessler, and the second low-gross winner was Ann Shockley.

The overall low-net OPLGA Governors' Cup Champion was Sally Stafford. She won the championship in a sudden victory playoff against Frankie Gomsak, on the first hole.

The first flight, first low-net winner was Susan Morris, and the second low-net winner was Chung Cho.

The second flight, first low-net winner was Frankie Gomsak, and the second low net winner was Ann Shockley.

Lunch and the awards ceremony were held at the Ocean Pines Clubhouse following the tournament.



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**Eddie Wells**  
*Director*

## Winterizing efforts & landscaping underway

The leaf collection is wrapping up for another year - thankfully! While the bag leaf program and the yard opening ended in December, the leaf vacuum will continue throughout Ocean Pines until all areas are vacuumed at least twice, or until the first snowfall.

Speaking of snow, Public Works is requesting that when it does snow, please remove your vehicles from the roadways. This makes it easier for us to maneuver the equipment through the already narrow roads and eliminates any damage that could occur to your vehicle.

Recently, the North Gate was spruced up for the holidays. The bridge was power washed, then decorations were placed by the Public Works staff. The staff are also looking into replacement options for lighting at the bridge.



**Nobie Violante**  
*Manager*

## T-dock expansion & bulkhead replacement continues

At the recent Board of Directors meeting, the Fisher Marine contract was renewed again for bulkhead replacement for 2022-2023. A little over 2,000 sq. ft. of bulkhead is scheduled to be replaced in fall of 2022.

The locations to be done are Pintail Drive North and Pintail Park. Once the permits are approved, residents in the areas of replacement will receive a packet of information about what needs to be done before the bulkhead is replaced.

Public Works is also assisting in obtaining the approvals for the anticipated T-dock expansion at the Yacht Club Marina. These boat slips will be used exclusively for patrons of the Yacht Club Marina and restaurant, and should be installed before the beginning of the summer season.

## Clarification on tree removal height - over 6 inches

Thanks to everyone who reported the misprint in the fall newsletter regarding tree removal. As a clarification, any tree over 6 inches (not 6 feet) in diameter needs approval from the CPI Department prior to removing. Violations will still be issued for any tree over 6 inches removed without a permit.

For tree guidelines, and for additional questions on what is and is not allowed in Ocean Pines, please contact the CPI Department at 410-641-7425, or stop by the CPI Department and pick up a copy of the Architectural Review Committee Guidelines. The guidelines can also be viewed online at <https://www.oceanpines.org/documents/10184/104157/ARC+Guidelines+Final+Form+3-25-20+APPROVED+by+ARC+and+BOD.pdf>. There, you will find all you need to know about what can and cannot be done in Ocean Pines.

No one likes to receive a violation notice in the mail, especially on something small such as an unauthorized sign. Many of these violations can be avoided by reading the guidelines.

While the offseason is upon us, customer service is still busy assisting everyone through email and phone calls. As a reminder, for any questions, concerns, complaints, and general information, please contact [info@oceanpines.org](mailto:info@oceanpines.org), or call 410-641-7717 during business hours (410-641-7747 on nights and weekends).



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*Office Manager*



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**Steve Phillips**  
Director of Finance/  
Controller

## Favorable budget variance

OPA once again produced a favorable operating budget variance for the month of November 2021, bringing the year-to-date positive operating variance to approximately \$1.4 million. The year-to-date results continue to be driven by the record-setting revenues generated by OPA's amenities during the summer season.

Net revenues account for approximately \$1.28 million in favorability versus the budget to date. While generating these excess revenues, OPA still was able to save and effectively manage expenses to the tune of approximately \$150K.

The General Manager's proposed budget was released to the public just prior to Christmas for the third straight year. This gives the Budget and Finance Committee and the Board of Directors additional time to closely examine the detail prior to the January meetings.

This year, we have the new reserve study information available to incorporate into the budget-related reserve analysis. Discussion also will occur related to the re-allocation of the current surplus that is on hand due to the record-setting performance. The Budget and Finance meetings are scheduled this year for Jan. 4-6, with the Board of Directors meetings following two weeks later.



## Summary Financial Report

Year-to-Date 11/30/2021

### OPERATING ACCOUNT SUMMARY UNAUDITED

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
	(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)		
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Assessments	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$0
Grants	549	485	64
Amenities (Net)	5,755	4,553	1,202
Recreation & Parks	236	301	(65)
Other fees and Income	1,069	557	512
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>16,957</b>	<b>15,244</b>	<b>1,713</b>
<b>Less transfers to reserve accounts</b>	<b>(3,694)</b>	<b>(3,261)</b>	<b>(433)</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenues</b>	<b>13,263</b>	<b>11,983</b>	<b>1,280</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Administration & Management	1,277	1,314	37
Amenities	3,620	3,262	(358)
Recreation & Parks	486	606	120
Police	1,020	1,093	73
Fire / EMS	434	434	0
Public Works / CPI	969	1,165	196
General Maintenance	359	444	85
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>8,165</b>	<b>8,318</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,098</b>	<b>3,665</b>	<b>1,433</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(20)</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$5,078</b>	<b>\$3,665</b>	<b>\$1,413</b>

## STAY IN TOUCH WITH OCEAN PINES

### EMAIL: THIS WEEK IN THE PINES

Be the first to know about Ocean Pines Association happenings with our weekly email, "This Week in the Pines." Sign up at [OceanPines.org](http://OceanPines.org)!

### WEB: OCEANPINES.ORG

News, amenity info, applications, contact numbers & more are available on OPA's website!

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## Helping to produce profitability for our community

**A**mong the many unsung heroes of the Ocean Pines Association are the handful of staff working in the Finance Department who helped produce record profitability during the last few years.

They work on the front lines at the Administration Building front desk, and in the back office building stronger controls and a more stable environment to ensure homeowner dollars are put to good use.

Accounting manager Julia Johnson is one of the newest members of the department, while membership and assessment supervisor Ruth Ann Meyer is among the longest tenured and most experienced.

### Julia Johnson, *accounting manager*

Originally from Latvia, Johnson came to Ocean Pines in August 2019. She previously worked for CPA firm



Robert M. Hoyt & Co. and was a senior accountant and financial analyst for Wicomico County.

Johnson wears many hats for the Ocean Pines Finance office, but her biggest project so far is the imple-

mentation of Northstar software systems.

“With that, I got to know a lot of people from different departments and what they actually do,” she said. “I had to learn their processes, so we could set up [the software] to introduce efficiency and transparency in daily operations.

“Everything changed with Northstar,” Johnson continued, adding that earlier processes included lots of manual entry.

“It was a great opportunity to revamp the whole system, and it gave us the chance to streamline a lot of processes,” she said. “Everybody had a kind of eye-opening experience, where they enter the financial transactions, and they end up here in Finance. Before that, it was manual submission of cash and manual recording, and that was extremely time consuming.”

She said Northstar also allows for better internal controls and real-time analysis of financial data. As an example, Johnson said she recently studied three years of fuel costs for the Ocean Pines Marinas, to see if there were any trends that could lead to future cost savings.

“We’re finding out a lot of good details,” she said. “With internal controls and analysis, you don’t see the results right away, but I feel that it makes the whole structure of Ocean

Pines stronger.

“It is really all about risk management,” Johnson continued. “Stronger internal controls reduce OPA’s exposure to risk. With Northstar, we are not only able to analyze data at any point of time, but we are also able to identify exposure to risk and reduce or eliminate this exposure by establishing stronger controls.”

Johnson added the new system allowed the Association to change its internal processes and create a greater degree of separation of duties in the department among herself, Meyers, **accountant Nekia Wise**, **accounts payable staffer Geraldine Tate**, and **Finance Director Steve Phillips**.

“Now, we have cash collections going through Nekia, bank reconciliations going through me, AP [accounts payable] going through Geraldine and assessments going through Ruth Ann, so there are so many people involved and I just feel so much more confident in the whole structure,” she said. “It makes me feel good that we’re better protected.”

### Ruth Ann Meyer, *membership & assessment supervisor*

While Johnson focuses on the back end of the Finance office, Meyer works on the front line. She supervises the front desk operations and, during assessment season, deals with thousands of homeowners face-to-face.

Meyer has been with Ocean Pines for two decades.

“I get to meet a lot of the residents and we get to hear a lot of feedback directly from them, whenever decisions are made,” she said. “We’re responsible for billing, all the sales of memberships, and we work closely with Julia to make sure the money is right.”

Aiding Meyer on the frontline is longtime office support staffer Joanne Heinlen, plus a rotating crew of summer help.

“Joanne is the most even-keeled person ever,” Meyer said. “Her demeanor is always the same and very professional, and she’s just great at the front desk. You need to have that type of person in the front to deal with all the different personalities that come through the door.”

Meyer said more than 50% of homeowners currently pay assessments in person, meaning she interacts with thousands of customers each spring, when the Association mails annual bills.

While assessment season is the most hectic part of her year, Meyer said there’s little to no downtime.

“Come September, we deal with liens and collections lawyers, and then go right into the budget and getting the annual billing statements ready,” she said. “And, once those go out, our busiest season starts.”

All of that can mean dealing with upwards of 100 visitors

## MEET THE TEAM: Ocean Pines Association Finance Department

and phone calls each day. Asked how she copes, Meyer joked, “You go into your office, you breathe for 10 seconds, and you come back out.”

“You have to remember that the customers want to be right all the time and, even if they’re not, you have to make them feel like they are,” she said.

Both women said recent customer service initiatives have been successful, including the promotion and use of [info@oceanpines.org](mailto:info@oceanpines.org) for general questions.

“That’s helped a lot,” Meyer said. “Having that central location that you can go to has been a big help, and of course if they don’t have answers they’ll go to the separate departments.

“I think it’s always challenging to be in customer service,” she continued. “You never know how people will take things. You think that they’ll be angry and they’re not, and then you have others that you think are going to be even-keeled and they really are not. So, you have to be ready for whatever they throw at you.”

Both also said flexibility is key when working in Finance.

“If somebody has a project, you might get pulled off of something that you thought was important and you are now on that new project,” Meyer said. “Any given day, you think

your day is planned and then all of the sudden it’s not.”

Johnson and Meyer have played major roles during the last two years, as the Association continues an unprecedented streak of financial success. That includes the \$1.2 million favorable-to-budget finish during the COVID-plagued fiscal year 2021, and a \$1.3 million budget favorability during the current fiscal period.

“What I’ve seen on my end ... I will praise all the people that work in every department,” Johnson said. “I’ve seen, personally, how much they’ve all done and helped things to change from worse to better.

“They’re extending the operations, they’re bringing more

people in, and they’re working with what they have and making things more approachable and interesting for the public to come in and enjoy what they do,” she continued. “I’ve seen it not only in the numbers, but in everything they do.”

Meyer said “teamwork” has been the key to recent success.

“Everyone has to do their part in order for it to be successful. It’s not just one person over another person, but it’s everyone working together,” she said. “I think we all also respect each other. We all have our moments of frustration, but then you get over it and you figure out how to fix it.”



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**Leo Ehrisman**  
Chief of Police

### WINTER NEWS UPDATES

With the increase in calls for service during this time of year, our department would like to thank the community members for keeping us informed about activity in their neighborhoods. Some of this information has helped identify suspects in crimes and violations as well as suspicious activity that we have used

to recover stolen property and make arrests in cases including thefts, assaults, scams and identity theft.

Computer crimes that include banking issues and targeting valuable adults are at an all-time high. Please monitor those family members who may not be aware of scams and identity theft issues.

The start of a new year will bring many changes and mandates with police reform and training requirements. Funding issues for new mandates such as officer body cams, computer software storage and officer recruitment and retention will all bring new challenges. This is a large concern not for Ocean Pines alone, but for all law enforcement agencies.



We would like to thank our community for the support shown us during the year with COVID issues and family concerns. We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season.

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Located at White Horse Park (239 Ocean Parkway), Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is open rain or shine year-round on Saturdays. The open-air market is a place where farmers, grocers, ranchers, watermen, bakers, specialty food purveyors, food trucks and artisanal craftsmen can interact with customers in a colorful, exciting, family-friendly atmosphere that mimics European village markets. Live music, special events and children's activities are just a part of what happens weekly. Current hours are from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. This season brings: **florals, fresh meat, eggs, seafood, produce, honey, jam, bread & pastries, artisan crafts, gourmet food items, pet treats, home décor & much more!** Be sure to find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## Community Corner now accepting reservations for 2022

**Attention all non-profits and civic groups!** The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market invites your organization to use its Community Corner spaces. This is the perfect place to greet the thousands that attend the Ocean Pines marketplace and share your information with the Worcester County community. Most activities that support an organization are allowed, except selling certain products that compete with the products sold by merchants of the market.

Spaces at the Community Corner are by reservation only for groups that have completed the registration form found on the market's webpage at [oceanpines.org](http://oceanpines.org) or by visiting the market manager any market day. The market does not provide set up items like tables, a canopy or chairs, just the allotted space. All Community Corner spaces are available year-round. Just register, schedule and come set up.

Has your phone number or email address changed?

Make sure we have your updated info!  
Call the Membership Dept. at 410.641.7717  
or email [member@oceanpines.org](mailto:member@oceanpines.org).



## Upcoming Special Market Days

### JANUARY

- 1 Market Closed (for New Year's Day)
- 15 National Hat Day
- 22 Let's Eat Pie Day Funday

### FEBRUARY

- 5 Superbowl Market
- 12 Sweetheart Market
- 19 Love Your Pet Day

### MARCH

- 5 In-Season Hours Start (8am-1pm)
- 12 Luck of the Irish Celebration
- 19 Let's Laugh Funday

### APRIL

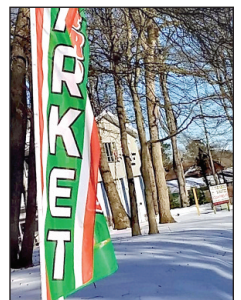
- 2 National Handmade Day
- 16 Easter Holiday Market

### MAY

- 7 Mother's Day Celebration
- 28 Memorial Day Holiday Market

### JUNE

- 4 11th Year Anniversary Celebration



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**David  
Van Gasbeck**  
OPVFD President



**Steve  
Grunewald**  
OPVFD Chief

## Annual Fund Drive donations are critical

The OPVFD has been providing 24-hour per-day, seven-days-per-week emergency service to the Ocean Pines and greater Worcester

County community for nearly 45 years. Our 50 volunteer firefighters and support staff are supplemented by 15 career firefighters/paramedics, and their combined efforts ensure that the over 2,000 (during fiscal year 2020) calls for service are always answered. Despite the increased risk associated with serving during a global pandemic, our department has continuously stepped up and is on pace to meet and/or exceed our calls for service from last year!

Each year, we set a plan for our fundraising efforts. Due to the ongoing pandemic, our efforts to raise funds have slowed. Donations from our fundraising campaigns go directly to maintaining and replacing fire and medical apparatus and equipment. However, this year and for the foreseeable future

our fundraising efforts are crucial as a result of the critical need to renovate our South Station.

Over the past 40 years, the department, its membership and the size of the apparatus have drastically grown, while our South Station has not. A feasibility study we commissioned determined that the station is not in compliance with many National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, just to name a few examples. The building is



extremely congested and lacks basic security and life-safety standards. To ensure continued recruitment and retention of high-quality membership, we need to create a functional living environment for our members and a station that the community of Ocean Pines will be proud of. Shortly, we will be presenting our plans through a community town hall meeting, which we hope you can attend.

However, today we are reaching out to ask you to donate to support our department's efforts and commitment to provide the best service to you. Your donations go directly to the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department and are critical to our ability to serve you.

Please help us maintain our effectiveness in protecting you and your property by contributing to our Annual Fund Drive. The OPVFD serves your community and is 100% tax deductible, as the OPVFD is a 501(c)(3) organization.

On behalf of the officers and members of the OPVFD, we thank you for your continued support.

## Help OPVFD help you

The OPVFD and medical responders are committed to their residents. Finding them during an emergency is highly important and having **street numbers visible** is a concern for when their services are needed.

Number plate signs offered by the OPVFD will help make homes visible to the responder especially at night and in inclement weather.

Signs are constructed of aluminum with **green and white reflective** material and numbers that measure 6 inches by 18 inches. All proceeds go directly to OPVFD.

The cost for the sign is \$42 or \$50 for the sign and post combination. Order forms are available online at [opvfd.com](http://opvfd.com) or at the south station. For more information, call 410.641.8272 or email [opvfd11@gmail.com](mailto:opvfd11@gmail.com).



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**Debbie Donahue**  
Director of  
Recreation & Parks

## LOOKING FORWARD TO A FUN 2022

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season! Although the winter season is upon us, we want to remind you of a few things coming up.

Our youth basketball program starts in January. Games are on Saturdays, with weeknight practices set by the coaches. **COACHES ARE NEEDED.** Interested in coaching? Please reach out to Kyle Jarmon.

The men's basketball league starts on Feb. 17. Whether you're an individual player or have a full team, give us a call and we will get you in. Zumba classes continue throughout the year on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings. Also be sure to check out some of the free seminars, held at the Ocean Pines Community Center, offered by local businesses.

The **Farmers & Artisans Market** is still going strong. Even though there may be fewer vendors, market hours will continue throughout the winter.

There are many different community organizations within Ocean Pines. If you're interested in getting involved, please stop by the Community Center to pick up a list of organizations or give us a call at 410-641-7052 to request the list via email.

The **Pine'er Artisan Gift Shop** is open Saturdays and Sundays throughout the winter and is located next to the Farmers Market. The handmade pieces in the shop are amazing and looking for a new home.

Most of us are not thinking about spring and summer yet, but the Recreation and Parks Department certainly is. We are preparing for the **Easter / Spring Celebration & Easter Egg Hunt (April 16), Bay Day (May), spring T-ball, soccer for the kids** and all of our other spring and summer events and programs, including **Summer Day Camps (registration begins in March!)**.

Keep an eye out for the spring and summer edition of the *Ocean Pines Activity Guide*, and as always be sure to visit the Ocean Pines website. If you are not a recipient of the Ocean Pines Association's weekly email, "This Week in the Pines," let us know and we can certainly get you on the list. These emails will keep you up to date on all the latest events throughout the community.

**Happy winter and stay safe. I look forward to seeing everyone soon!**

### 'Pup of the Pines' winner announced

A fox red Labrador retriever named "Lucy" has been named the top dog in the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department's "Pup of the Pines" photo contest.

Ten-month-old Lucy received the greatest number of votes in the annual contest. She was named the winner at the "Hometown Christmas" tree lighting ceremony on Saturday, Nov. 27 at White Horse Park.

Votes were cast in person at the Ocean Pines Halloween/fall festival and community center, and via an online survey.

Kevin and Susie Gordon, Lucy's owners, said Lucy loves the Ocean Pines Dog Park and walking around the community.

As "Pup of the Pines," Lucy receives a free 2022 dog park registration. She will also be the official face of the dog park and will be featured in the *Ocean Pines Activity Guide* and other postings throughout the year.

Money raised from the contest entry fees will be used for upgrades and improvements to the dog park.



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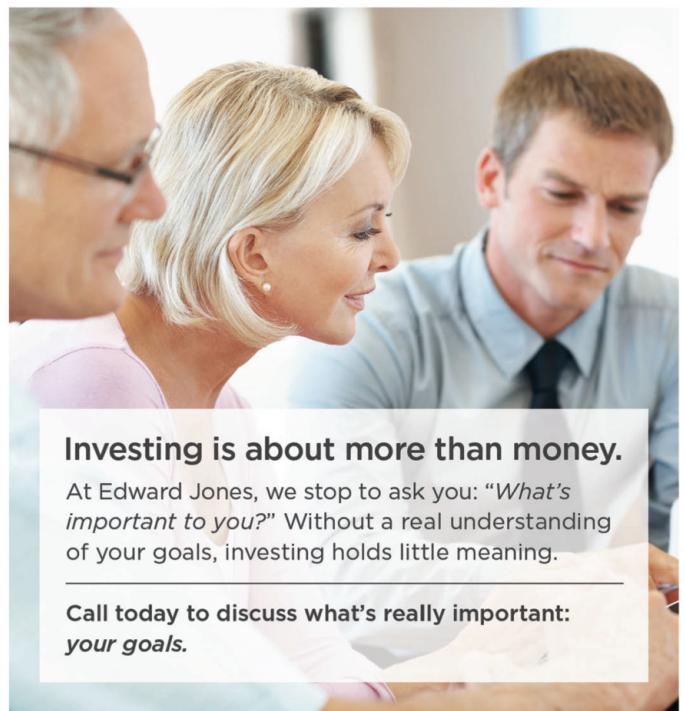
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## Inaugural Haunted House and Oktoberfest Pickleball Tournament successful

Ocean Pines' Recreation and Parks and Racquet Sports each held debut events during Halloween weekend, and organizers said both events were successful.

The Recreation and Parks Department, with help from Public Works and a team of volunteers, hosted the first Haunted House on Oct. 22-24.

Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue indicated feedback from the public said the event "was just the right mix of scary and fun, and they could tell that we had worked hard to put it together."

"A lot of people complimented the fact that we had done something for Halloween. And for our first time, it went pretty well," she said.

Donahue said she's wanted to do a haunted house for five years. An issue with an outdoor location canceled the event one prior year, and the pandemic prevented the haunted house from occurring last Halloween season.

This year, a team of staff and volunteers came together to transform the community center into several rooms of fun and scary scenes for guests to walk through. There were actors in costumes, and each space was transformed into a unique, festive, and occasionally creepy scene, filled with clowns, scarecrows, witches, werewolves and mad scientists.

Donahue said Josh Vickers from Ocean Pines Public Works brought his experience hosting similar happenings, most recently at the Selbyville Library.

"They remodeled the library and decided not to do it again, so then we went and purchased all the things they had, for us to do it ourselves," Donahue said.

Vickers said another obstacle was following guidance

from the local fire marshal.

"It took a team effort between Recreation and Parks and members of Public Works," he said. "It took a lot of patience and the ability to listen to different ideas and design changes. And, finally, it took a lot of heart and commitment from the actors and volunteers."

"We had quite a few volunteers and staff members that took part in it," Donahue said, including Clubhouse Bar and Grille Manager Judie Scotti, a member of the Ocean Pines Players, and many friends and family members.

Donahue said about 200 people attended the haunted house, which took roughly 10-15 minutes to walk through.

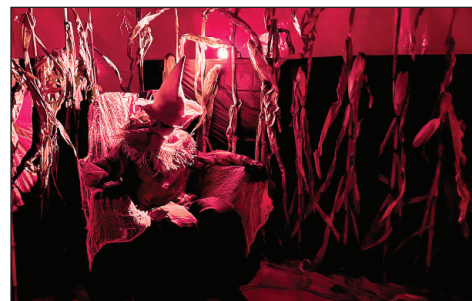
"Not bad for our first time," she said. "I'd say that's a pretty good start, and we plan on returning again next year."

"It was quite an endeavor and it took a lot of help, and I really do appreciate all the help from Public Works, because I know they have other things to do. It was nice of them to come and help put all that together," she said.

Vickers said he was also pleased with how the haunted house turned out.

"I believe if we can make it an annual thing, that next year will be even more spectacular and even spookier than the year before it," he said. "I think we had a great turn out. I wish there were a few more people, but it was a lot of fun and there were many exciting moments."

"I definitely need to make a big shout out to a few members who made the paper plan a reality, including Paul Jahn, Tony Howard, Public Works and Recreation and Parks employees for the long nights and days, and also to Debbie for taking a chance on the idea," Vickers added.







Meanwhile, the Ocean Pines Racquet Center held its own debut event from Oct. 22-24, the Oktoberfest Pickleball Tournament.

Donahue, who also oversees Racquet Sports, said 245 players took part.

"We're very happy with the turnout, and this will become an annual pickleball tournament for our Racquet Center," she said. "Our first one went very well, and there were lots of compliments on how it was run. Everything went very well.

"Everything ran on time, the food vendors were great, the beer cart was a success, and everybody seemed to have a good time," she added.

Co-organizer Darryl Noble, who oversaw the tournament with his wife, Cathy, said the event was a huge success.

"We received countless verbal compliments from participants, as they were participating and leaving the tournament site. It is very gratifying to hear players are happy," he said.

"For initiating and running the tournament, we used cutting-edge technology, where almost everything is done on participants' mobile devices. I've been playing pickleball for 12 years and served on the national governing board of pickleball. It's amazing to see how pickleball is growing and evolved from the days when everything was kept on paper and done on charts, to where we are today where everything is digital," Noble added.

Darryl and Cathy also forwarded some of the many positive texts and emails they received following the event:

**Participant Steve Emmons said,** "Cathy, just wanted to send a short note to say thanks for the great journey. Enjoyed a Friday and Saturday trip from Martinsburg, West Virginia

with good weather, nice people, and a few wins. The best part was getting my dad, who also plays rec pickleball, to come along and enjoy some getaway time together. Thanks much!"

**Participant Barb Kirschner said,** "Thanks so much for an awesome tournament. It was the first one I've ever participated in and will remember it always. Kudos to you both for overseeing such a great event. Good luck tomorrow and I look forward to playing with you in Florida!"

**Ocean Pines Pickleball Club President Frank Creamer Frank Creamer said,** "I want to congratulate you both on the success of the Oktoberfest tournament. I have spoken with a number of the players and all comments were positive. From being a past tournament director, I know how much time and effort goes into running a tournament the size of yours. Both of you are an incredible asset to OP and our Pickleball Club. Job well done!"

**Participant Edward Longo said,** "I competed this past weekend in the OP tournament. This was my first tournament – and I felt compelled to write to you on how incredibly well the tournament was run. The registration, scheduling, and overall experience was just amazing. I have to say I was a bit nervous about competing in a tournament like this, but it was simply awesome. I can only imagine the work it took to put this on – so thank you for an amazing job! I look forward to playing in it again."

Ocean Pines General Manager John Viola said both events are proof that the Association continues to explore new and exciting ways to expand the offerings for homeowners, residents and guests.

"We have been successful in showing organic growth across the board, and this past weekend was another example of our team coming together and putting on some great, new events," he said. "Thank you to our staff for coming through and making this happen, and thank you to the hundreds of local people who came out and enjoyed these events in Ocean Pines."







## What is most important?

Q4: As an Ocean Pines property owner or resident, how important are each of the following to you? (1=Not Important at All; 5=Extremely Important)

Rank	Attribute	Weighted Average*	% Very Or Extremely Important (Top 2 Box)
#1	Safety	4.58	95.2
#2	Maintenance of Infrastructure	4.49	94.2
#3	Community Appearance/Aesthetics	4.32	89.8
#4	Assessment Fee Value for the \$	4.18	83.1
#5	Ocean Pines Overall Customer Service	4.13	83.2

**Safety, Maintenance of Infrastructure & Community Appearance had the Highest Importance**

## OPA survey shows high community satisfaction

*Rates safety, infrastructure and community appearance as top priorities*

Overall satisfaction, what is most important to property owners, core values, and feedback on key issues were top goals for a recent community survey, according to Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairperson Bernie McGorry.

McGorry, in a presentation to the Ocean Pines Board on Dec. 11, said the survey concluded in November and included 1,838 respondents. Of those, 1,127 or 61.3% were full-time resident homeowners, while 684 (37.2%) were part-time owners. A majority, 51.9%, were female.

He said the committee was thrilled with the engagement and response of the community, adding some national polls only include 1,000 responses. The Ocean Pines survey, he said, nearly doubled the goal for responses.

McGorry said roughly 65 of the surveys were paper copies and the rest were completed online.

He said most of the survey respondents were 51-80 years of age, which is likely similar to the median age of homeowners.

McGorry said those polled were happy with the community as a whole, with 95.2% either somewhat satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied being a property owner.

"You hear things on social media but, overall, Ocean Pines residents are very satisfied and they're very likely to recommend Ocean Pines to others," he said. "My overall takeaway is ... Ocean Pines residents are very happy, in general."

Additionally, he said 83% were likely to recommend Ocean Pines as a place to live.

McGorry said homeowners singled out three issues as most important to them. He said 95.2% percent said safety is either very important or extremely important, while 94.2% said the same about maintenance of infrastructure, and 89.8% said the same about community appearance and aesthetics.

As for how Ocean Pines is currently handling those issues, McGorry said safety rated "slightly above expectations" (3.83 out of 5), while maintenance of infrastructure (2.78) and community appearance (3.16) roughly met expectations.

"In general, we're doing pretty good," he said, adding maintenance of infrastructure had the largest gap between importance and level of satisfaction.

"We have a 50-year-old community [and] there's a lot of work to be done with drainage and road maintenance, bridge maintenance [and] bulkheads," he said. "That was the biggest gap ... the difference between what was important and whether people were satisfied with how we're doing."

What that means going forward, McGorry said, is likely a committee recommendation that Ocean Pines "continue to

invest heavily in infrastructure."

On core values, McGorry said all four core values listed in the survey rated highly. Integrity rated at the top (86.4% answering "very important" or "extremely important"), followed by accountability (82.2%), collaboration (76.3%) and sustainability (74%).

On top issues and challenges facing the community, the

survey found transparency between the Association and membership rated at the top (86.7% answering "very important" or "extremely important"), with infrastructure (84.5%) and the Board and GM working collaboratively (80%) rounding out the top three.

"The good news is, transparency and collaboration don't cost a lot of money," McGorry said. "It could be just increasing communication ... [there's]

maybe slight things that could be done."

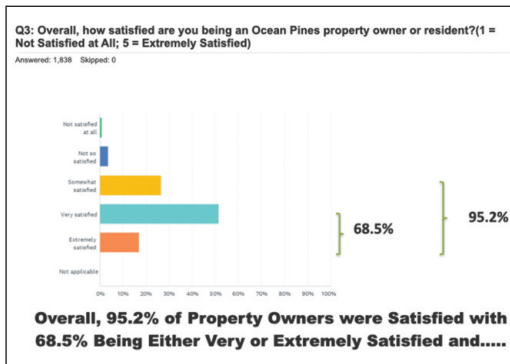
The survey also found that 62.5% either slightly or strongly agreed that traffic on Route 589 is a concern, while 64.7% either slightly or strongly supported electronic voting for future Board of Directors elections and referendums.

On electronic voting, McGorry said the average age of survey respondents – and the fact that almost all surveys were done online – suggests Association members are "pretty tech savvy." Still, he cautioned some are strongly opposed to changing ballot procedures.

"I would walk slowly on that and look at the whole [survey] numbers" he said. "Maybe it's a hybrid approach."

McGorry said there was only lukewarm support for new or improved amenities and services, with 36.2% slightly interested or extremely interested in improved walking and biking paths, 41.1% favoring a fitness center and 38.6% in support of improved street lighting.

"The next steps for the Strategic Planning Committee are to continue to dig further into the survey results and then share the detailed survey results with the community in a public town hall, likely in February," McGorry said. "The community input received in this survey and the planned town hall will be critical for us to finalizing our strategic plan recommendation."



### Top Issues/Challenges to Address

Q7: Please rate how important the following Ocean Pines challenges/ opportunities are to you? (1=Not Important at All; 5= Extremely Important)

Rank	Issue/Challenge	Weighted Average	% Very Or Extremely Important
1	Transparency between OPA & Members	4.43	86.7
2	Infrastructure Issues (e.g. drainage, roads, bh, etc.)	4.31	84.5
3	BOD & GM working collaboratively	4.24	80.0
4	Responsiveness of OPA to my Requests	4.13	76.9
5	Environmental & Sustainability Efforts	4.11	76.0
6	Enforcement of Rules & Regulations	3.92	66.6
7	BOD Continuity & Consistency	3.84	80.0

**Transparency, Infrastructure & Collaboration were top 3**



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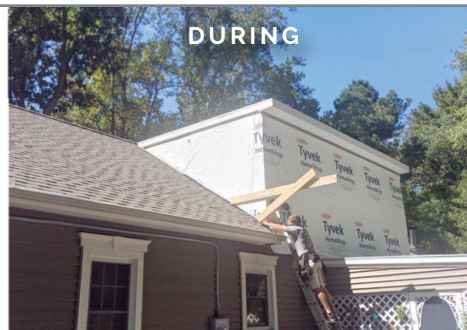
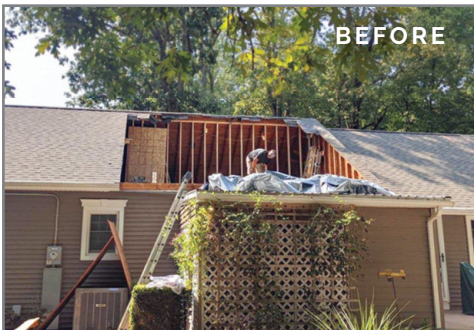
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## Pitching In: Ocean Pines partners with Vista, MCBP and volunteers for Bainbridge planting

Dozens of local people pitched in at Bainbridge Park in Ocean Pines in October, helping to plant new vegetation around the pond area.

The planting was among the final phases of Bainbridge Pond improvements, said to bolster water quality and reduce instances of flooding in the area.

Participating on Monday were the Ocean Pines Public Works Department, the Ocean Pines Garden Club, representatives from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program and Vista Design, Inc., and local college students and other volunteers.

Richard Polk, principal for Vista Design, said the new aquatic landscaping – including 50 trees and 50 bushes – would help remove nutrients and supply stability for the pond.

“It will foster a robust buffer for the improved pond, and also provide some shading through the trees for the water, to keep it from getting so hot in the summertime. It will also provide a habitat for animals,” Polk said.

It was a beautiful, sunny day and Polk said the early October weather was perfect for planting.

“It’s still warm enough and the water tables are coming back up, and that will provide exactly what these trees and vegetation need,” he said.

Polk said the trees and bushes would go around the perimeter of the pond, and some additional landscaping would be done around the newly planted aquatic benches.

“Those were installed in the pond and the new vegetation will help hold that aquatic bench in place and provide a habitat for small animals. It will also help filter the water and remove more of the nitrogen phosphorus that we’re trying to capture,” he said.

Polk said the plantings were part of the water quality grant awarded by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

“It is really one of the latter phases,” he said. “The improvements were done this summer, and now the landscaping is going in to help preserve and further enhance the water quality improvements that were done,” he said.

Polk added that Vista and Maryland Coastal Bays would watch the area over the winter.

“I don’t envision any issues, but if there are we’ll come back out and do maintenance in spring,” he said. “At that point, we’re just going to monitor the longtime health of the area and make sure that everything stays stable.”

For Ocean Pines residents, Polk said the work would produce better quality water and some reduced flooding.

“It is a water quality project, and it does that through

nutrient uptake in the plants as well as sedimentation of small particles in the plants. It does prevent a lot of the nutrients – phosphorus and nitrogen – from reaching the St. Martin River,” Polk said.

“What it means for the residents is, if you’re downstream of it, you are having better water quality,” he continued. “We’ve also made improvements in the amount of water that leaves here during a storm event, and we’ve given Ocean Pines the ability – if they know a large storm is coming – to pump this pond down in the days leading up to that event, thereby storing more of that water during a large storm to prevent flooding downstream.”

Maryland Coastal Bays Executive Director Kevin Smith said his organization has been involved with the project from the start, including working with Worcester County and state officials to secure grant funding.

“We went over the plans with them and it’s been a collaborative process with the county and Ocean Pines, to get this thing done,” he said. “Getting the money to get the work done in the pond was the big thing, and we were successful with that.”

Smith said Maryland Coastal Bays also aided in similar activities with the Town of Berlin, including stormwater improvements there a few years ago.

“We like working with communities like Ocean Pines and the Town of Berlin to help get some of their stormwater management issues done. Obviously, that’s a big need in the area and it’s not going to go away,” he said.

“What we’re hoping in Ocean Pines, is that we’re going to be able to retain some more water here and get better water quality leaving Ocean Pines and going to the coastal bays. So far, it looks great.” Smith continued. “We’ve got a lot of volunteers here today and it’s a great day for it.”

Ocean Pines Public Works Director Eddie Wells said about eight members of his staff took part in the planting.

“Public Works is doing their part to help out, and we’ve been involved throughout the whole process, starting all the way back with the planning,” he said.

Wells said the improvements at Bainbridge have already started to pay off.

“It’s doing what it’s supposed to do in improving the water quality – that’s the main thing,” he said. “This is basically the last phase, and after this we just have a little bit of paving to do.”



## Kiwanis holds food drive

During December, every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. until noon, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean City - Ocean Pines collected food in the Ocean Pines Community Center parking lot.

Pictured, from left, are Kiwanians Carolyn Dryzga, Food Drive Chairperson Candy Foreman, and Kitty Wrench sorting some of the nonperishable goods to be taken to Diakonia for their pantry. Both Kiwanis members and the public made the donations.



## Marine Activities Advisory Committee seeking suggestions

The Marine Activities Advisory Committee (MAAC) is gathering comments and suggestions from the Ocean Pines community on what marine projects should be addressed by the committee. The committee will review, sort and prioritize the comments and concerns and send recommendations to the Board of Directors on behalf of the MAAC.

The MAAC serves as an advisory group to the Ocean Pines Board, and as liaison to a number of government agencies (such as DNR) commissions, and volunteer groups (such as Maryland Coastal Bays). In addition, the MAAC disseminates information on water and marine safety, regulations, launching of boats, and conduct in Ocean Pines parking and boat ramp areas. It also works with local groups on activities to raise awareness of issues affecting our waterways.

The committee is already in the planning stages for some fun family activities in 2022 that will benefit the community and provide education on how to keep recreational boating areas safe and clean.

Please send suggestions and comments to John Latham at [jlatham1595@yahoo.com](mailto:jlatham1595@yahoo.com).



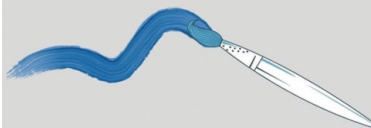
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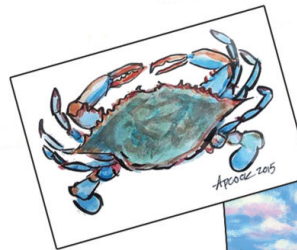
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## ‘Light Up the Pines’ outdoor decorating event returns to Ocean Pines

Dozens of Ocean Pines residents and property owners added holiday cheer to the community by participating in the 2021 “Light Up the Pines” outdoor decorating program.

Those who registered with the program were featured on an online Google map and were entered into a drawing to win one of three \$50 bill credits donated by program sponsor Choptank Electric Cooperative.

The first 25 registered participants also received a small goody bag, courtesy of Choptank Electric.

“Choptank Electric Cooperative was pleased to celebrate the holiday spirit in Ocean Pines with the ‘Light Up the Pines’ event,” said Elizabeth Hallett, manager of marketing and communications. “We enjoyed seeing how our members chose to bring the holiday season to life!”

The winners of the \$50 bill credit were **PJ & Geri Welch**, **the Farley family**, and **Alison Webb Schweiger**.





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## Craft Club announces annual donations

The Pine’er Craft Club of Ocean Pines recently announced annual donations of \$5,800 to several Ocean Pines departments and community groups.

Since forming in 1974, the club has given more than \$175,000 to the Ocean Pines community.

This year, Club President Sharon Puser said funds were distributed to the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks, Police and Public Works departments, along with the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, Ocean Pines Library, Neighborhood Watch, and the Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation.

Puser said profits from craft fairs and from the Artisan Gift Shop went toward the donations.

Additional money was raised this year during “Desserts in the Park” events that coincided with summer “Concerts in the Park.”

“This was the first time we tried that, and that went over well. Our members baked, and then we sold the goodies at the concerts,” Puser said, adding the events would continue next summer.

“The purpose of our club is basically to give back to the community,” Puser continued. “Through our creativity – making crafts and selling crafts – it means a lot to us to be able to support our local groups.”

During a recent holiday and installation luncheon, Puser said a new club member was surprised to find out how much the group has donated.

“She said, ‘Now I’m even more proud to be a member!’” Puser said. “She knew we gave money back, but she never realized how much it was in total.”

Puser said the club is always looking for new members. Regular Pine’er Craft Club meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month, starting at 10 a.m. in the community center.

“People can come in any time, and we love to have new members come and help us,” she said. “For January, we’re doing a project for Meals on Wheels, so we would love to have some extra help!”

The Artisan Gift Shop, in White Horse Park next to the Farmer’s Market and across from the Administration Building on 239 Ocean Parkway, is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information on the shop or the Pine’er Craft Club, contact Puser at 410-208-3032 or [opcrafterclub@aol.com](mailto:opcrafterclub@aol.com).



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## About Ocean Pines Amenity Memberships

### What amenity memberships can I purchase?

Memberships are offered for swimming, golf, tennis, platform tennis and pickleball. A racquet sports combo membership allows access to all three racquet sports. A Beach Club parking pass is also available.

### Do I have to be an Ocean Pines property owner or resident to purchase an amenity membership?

No. All memberships, with the exception of the racquet sports combo membership, are available to the public. Ocean Pines residents and property owners, however, do receive reduced rates on membership purchases.

### When can memberships for the coming year be purchased?

Ocean Pines membership applications are sent out with the annual Ocean Pines property owner assessment bill, which is due May 1 of each year (Ocean Pines' fiscal year runs May 1-April 30). Assessment bills and membership applications are usually mailed out around the middle of March, after the budget is approved by the Board of Directors. Applications are also available at the Ocean Pines Administration Building and online at [oceanpines.org](http://oceanpines.org) for those who don't receive an assessment bill in the mail.

### Can I purchase a membership if I haven't paid my assessment?

No. Amenity memberships cannot be purchased until the annual assessment has been received and processed by the Ocean Pines Membership Department. Please note that if you mail your assessment bill in the return envelope that accompanies it, it will take approximately 7-10 business days for the payment to apply to your account since those payments are sent to the Bank of Ocean City.

### How can I avoid waiting in line to renew or purchase a membership?

Once your annual assessment has been paid and applied to your property, you can purchase or renew your membership by mailing it to 239 Ocean Parkway. After your application is received by the Membership Department, your membership will be activated - usually within a couple of days - and ready to use. Membership applications also can be placed in the drop box in the outer lobby of the Administration Building. Otherwise, applications can be taken in person to the Administration Building front desk.

### Is there anything special I need to do if I'm purchasing a new membership?

Not necessarily. If you already have an Ocean Pines property owner/resident photo ID card, then nothing is required beyond making sure your assessment has been paid, completing the membership application and paying for your membership(s). ID cards are used as member identification

for the Ocean Pines pools, racquet center and golf club. They can also be used as identification to enter the Ocean Pines Beach Club bathhouse.

If you do NOT have an Ocean Pines ID card, then you'll need to come to the Administration Building during normal business hours to have your photo taken and your card made. You can also email a headshot to [member@oceanpines.org](mailto:member@oceanpines.org) if you're unable to come to the Administration Building to have your picture taken.

### How do I renew my Beach Club parking pass?

If you already have a Beach Club parking tag from a previous year, then nothing is required beyond making sure your assessment has been paid, completing the membership application (please write your Beach Club parking pass number on the application) and paying for your pass. Your parking pass will be renewed automatically once the payment has been processed. Please be sure to hang on to the parking pass since replacement passes, whether for the current year or for subsequent years, incur an additional fee.

If you have not previously purchased a Beach Club parking pass, then you'll need to pick it up at the Administration Building during regular business hours once it's ready, usually within a few days after the application has been submitted. If you're not able to stop by the Administration Building during normal business hours, let the Membership Department know (call 410-641-7717 or email [member@oceanpines.org](mailto:member@oceanpines.org)) and your parking pass will be left at the Ocean Pines Police Department, where it can be picked up at any time.

Please note that Beach Club parking passes MUST be picked up in person, either at the Administration Building or at the Police Department.

### Does my Beach Club parking pass include use of the Beach Club Pool?

No. A separate swim membership is required to use the Beach Club Pool. You may also pay the daily entrance fee at the pool. Show your Ocean Pines ID card to receive the resident rate.

### How do I purchase a membership to the Ocean Pines Dog Park?

Annual memberships for the Ocean Pines Dog Park are purchased separately from other amenity memberships. Dog Park memberships, which are valid May 1-April 30, are available through the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department. Call 410-641-7052 for more information.

### Where can I learn more about Ocean Pines amenity memberships?

Information about memberships can be found online at [oceanpines.org/web/pages/amenity-membership](http://oceanpines.org/web/pages/amenity-membership), by calling the Membership Department at 410-641-7717 or by emailing [info@oceanpines.org](mailto:info@oceanpines.org).



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**Fri, MAR 11**

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**Sat, MAR 12**

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**Sun. APR 17**

**Easter Brunch**

### Thursday

**LUNCH**

1/2-Price Burgers

**DINNER**

Trivia Night 6–8pm

### Friday

**LUNCH**

1/2-Price Flatbreads

**DINNER**

1/2-Price Wine Bottles & \$2 Off Appetizers

### Saturday

**LUNCH**

Grilled Cheeses

**DINNER**

Prime Rib Night \$17.99 12oz. | \$21.99 16oz.

### Sunday

**LUNCH**

1/2-Price Sandwiches

**DINNER**

\$15.95 Turkey Dinner

Single serving. White & dark meat, rolls, mashed potatoes  
& gravy, stuffing, veggie, cranberry sauce, slice of pumpkin pie

Photo:  
Dan Collins

