



OCEAN PINES REPORT

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Kiwanis Club wraps holiday donation season with successful coat and toy drives

Club looking for new members; meetings held each Wednesday

For decades, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines / Ocean City have made their mark through volunteer work and charitable giving.

Globally, Kiwanis are a dedicated service organization of men and women who share the challenge of community and world improvement. Formed in 1915, the nonprofit group boasts more than 7,000 adult clubs and 8,300 youth clubs in 85 nations and geographic areas, with over 600,000 active members.

Locally, the Kiwanis have been active since 1980. The nonprofit sponsors five youth leadership programs throughout Worcester County Schools and engages in fundraising activities that generate roughly \$40,000 each year for local programs and people in need.

On any given day, Kiwanis members can be seen collecting clothing donations for local shelters, cooking breakfast for Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks events, or raising money for scholarships.

David Landis, the area marketing and media chairperson, first became involved in the Kiwanis in 2004. He previously worked in marketing and sales in the Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia areas and moved to Ocean Pines upon his retirement in 2003.

“To me, it’s all about service, and the main thing that interested me from the start was helping kids,” he said. “We have advisors that go to all these different school clubs, and they go to their meetings, help them to see how we



do community service, and try to give them examples so that they’re ready for something like that when they get older. And we can do that all the way from elementary school up through high school.”

Education is also a part of regular Kiwanis Club meetings. Landis said they often have guest speakers and representatives from groups including the Worcester County Developmental Center, Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

Guests help educate club members on local programs that benefit the community, and their organizations generally become the beneficiaries of Kiwanis charitable giving.

Club members are actively involved in community fundraising and engagement throughout the year, but Landis said the Kiwanis are especially active during the holiday season.

In November, Kiwanis membership collected more than 300 coats for local charities during a five-week donation drive at the Ocean Pines Community Center.

(cont. on pg. 3)





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(cont. from pg. 1)

A related toy drive helped gather three SUV loads for Worcester G.O.L.D., a nonprofit that provides emergency financial assistance and basic needs for Worcester

County residents living with low-incomes.

Kiwanis also pitched in during the Recreation and Park Department's annual "Breakfast with the Grinch" event on Dec. 2, cooking pancakes, scrambled eggs and sausages.

"We all love to volunteer for community stuff. It's just fun," Landis said, adding that he's been mixing pancakes for the Kiwanis since 2004. "They put me on it right away, and they complimented me the first time I ever did it that it never ran out."

Throughout the year, there are also regular clothing and canned good drives, blood drives, and concessions for countless events. Kiwanis members cook hamburgers and hotdogs during events like Bay Day, and the weekly Concerts in the Park series each summer, with proceeds going toward scholarships and other charitable endeavors.

Keeping up with those activities requires the help of many volunteers, which Landis said can sometimes be an issue. He said the local Kiwanis previously had as many as 135 members, but now there are just over 50.

"If we lose people that moved or passed away, we might replace them with new people, so our numbers have been fairly steady. But finding good volunteers has been a problem for groups all over the Eastern Shore," he said.

Landis encouraged anyone who might be interested in joining the club to stop by one of the regular meetings.

"We're generally pretty quiet from January through March, so it's a great time to stop by, learn about



the club and see if you're interested in getting involved," he said. For those interested in pitching in, Landis said the rewards are great.

"It's a lot of satisfaction, and it's a good feeling of having done some good in this community," he said.

"And I'm really proud to say that this community is very supportive of us. We couldn't do what we do without them. We can offer raffle tickets, make pancakes and hotdogs, and bring our cars out to collect donations, but it's up to the community to respond - and they always do."

Landis said an Ocean Pines woman came by during the coat and toy drives and stopped for a few minutes to talk. Her husband recently passed away and she wanted to donate some of his things, and she also brought a cash donation.

"She said, 'I really love what your club does,' and I told her, if you're looking for something to do, why don't you come by after the New Year to one of our meetings?" Landis said. "I'll tell anyone, come and see what we're all about, and there's no obligation," he continued. "Give it a chance and see if it's for you."

"We've been around for 43 years and hopefully we'll be around a lot longer," he continued. "But it's going to take membership to keep us alive and we would really appreciate people just checking us out and seeing if it's a fit for them."

The Kiwanis Club meets in the Ocean Pines Community Center on 235 Ocean Parkway every Wednesday at 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and coffee and donuts are available. Members pay \$3 toward food, and a 50/50 raffle is available for an additional \$3. Attendance is free for prospective new members.

For more info on the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines / Ocean City, visit www.kiwanisofopoc.org or www.facebook.com/servingthechildrenoftheworld.



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Volunteers help create 1,000 care packages for U.S. soldiers

Roughly 200 volunteers helped prepare 1,000 care packages for U.S. soldiers and military dogs during an event at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club in October.

The event was a partnership between the Yacht Club and Steel Blu Vodka, a local company that donates 10% of its profits for the care packages. With those funds, Steel Blu buys nonperishable goods – such as toiletries, snacks, and office supplies – and packages them with help from local volunteers.

Those volunteers showed up in droves during a sunny Sunday at the Yacht Club. Among them were Maryland Del. Wayne Hartman, Ocean Pines Association President Rick Farr, General Manager John Viola, and several Ocean Pines Board members.

“It was nice to see so many members of our Ocean Pines community come together and support our incredible military in putting together 1,000 care packages,” Farr said. “I would like to thank the Ocean Pines Community that participated, my fellow Board colleagues, Steel Blu Vodka, the staff with the Matt Ortt Company, the Ocean Pines Get Involved Facebook Group, and all the other sponsors for rallying the community for this great event,” Farr said.

The event was scheduled to run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., but

so many helpers showed up that work finished in about an hour. Volunteers moved between stations set up on the Yacht Club patio to box up donated items and handwritten letters of support.

“It was such a beautiful turnout!” Chelsey Chmelik, a Matt Ortt Companies manager who helped to organize the event, said. “We busted it out in less than an hour because of all the wonderful volunteers who came out to support us.”

Chmelik thanked partnering sponsors Steel Blu Vodka, the Ocean Pines Yacht Club, Big Wave Marketing, Fully Promoted Apparel, Cup of Joe Entertainment, and the Ocean Pines Get Involved Facebook Group.

“I also want to shoutout the Matt Ortt Companies employees, who were a huge help,” she said. “And a special thank you to Esther Diller and Rick Farr for helping us reach so many volunteers.

“And, of course, thanks to our incredible community. The turnout was truly overwhelming and I can’t wait to watch this event grow,” Chmelik added.

Chmelik said she will continue to collect additional donations and handwritten letters of support for members of the U.S. Military. For more information, contact chelsey@mattorttcompanies.com.



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Meet the Team: Tony Howard

Driving around Ocean Pines, it's hard to miss the handiwork of Landscape Supervisor Tony Howard. His efforts include revitalization of several major entranceways, cleanup and caretaking of the parks, and an innovative aquatic planter.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Howard spent two decades as a landscaper and ran a deli and pizzeria before moving to Maryland in 2016.

In Ocean Pines, he was initially hired by the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department, but later transferred to work for Public Works Director Eddie Wells.

"I saw there was an open position over there, so I kept on bugging Eddie," Howard said with a laugh.

On an average day, Howard could be assigned anything from digging holes and trimming bushes, to coordinating with a community group, or spearheading any number of restoration projects assigned by General Manager John Viola.

"We do all the landscaping and take care of all the grounds," he said, which is no small feat in a large residential community of 8,500 homes. Howard currently works with a three-person crew that includes Mike Powell and Don Chalk.

"We take care of all of Ocean Pines, including the Veterans Memorial grounds," he said. "That includes a couple thousand yards of mulch, each and every year."

"During the mowing season, we do all the weed whacking in the morning and all the mowing during the afternoon, because the grass is too wet in the morning," he continued. "We also do the maintenance of the mowers ourselves, and we each have our own mowers and tools that we keep track of."

Howard's recent beautification projects include a collaboration with the Ocean Pines Garden Club to plant perennials and seasonal greenery at the North Gate.



Pictured, from left, are Don Chalk, Mike Powell and Tony Howard.



That means putting in palm trees during the summer, and pine trees during the holidays.

"The newest thing we did at the North Gate was pruning up all the holly bushes and cleaning all that up, and we planted mums and kale for the season," he said. "You can see that along the fencing on both sides."

His crew also helped restore the iconic sails and signage at the Yacht Club entrance, collaborated again with the Garden Club for Pintail Park plantings, and even pitched in with the Recreation and Parks Department's annual Haunted House.

Howard previously restored the large "OP" sign at the North Gate and redid the islands all over the Administration and Community Center parking lot.

During the holiday season, Howard and his crew were tasked with doubling down on previous light and decoration displays. They started by building seven large artificial trees that each have 2,500 lights.

"We came up with the idea of building the trees, and then we put one at the Yacht Club and one at the North Gate," he said, adding additional trees were also placed at the South Gate and Cathell Road entranceways. "We built the first few at Public Works, and then for the ones that are out on the lawns we put poles up and built them there onsite."

Howard's team also hung up new holiday banners, along with roughly 25,000 Christmas lights around the community.

"I think it turned out well," he said. A Facebook post about the holiday displays reached more than 5,000 people, with 250 positive impressions and 50 comments - all universally complimentary.



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"It makes you feel a little better when you see that," he said. "You're out there and you're freezing, and you might complain a little bit while you're doing it, but then you look and you see people writing all those nice comments, and it makes you feel pretty good."

"Especially at the North Gate, people will stop and tell us while we're putting them up that they're happy and they like it, and good job," Howard continued. "That stuff is always nice to hear."

Once that was done, the crew immediately moved onto the next project.

"The next thing we're going to start is at the four-way stop [on Manklin Creek Road]. We're going to cut down a lot of that growth, clean it up, and put in new lighting because there's not much on that end," he said. "We're going to do something a little better than what's there now."

Howard said he and his team keep getting assignments because their work has been so well received, and because they have proven themselves to be so dependable.

"Whenever we do stuff they like, we get more work!" he said with a laugh. "They'll say, 'Oh that looks good! Let's do more.' And we just get to work and do it."

Next spring, Howard hopes to bring back the floating planter boxes at the North Gate. He said the planters benefit



the pond and local wildlife and provide an aesthetic pop to the landscape.

"That was put on hold after last year because we didn't have enough help, but I'm probably going to try and put in new planters there, next season," he said. "I came up with a different design that should just look like an island out there within a couple of years, once it grows out."

Howard said the planters help filter the water by pulling nutrients out of the pond through their roots.

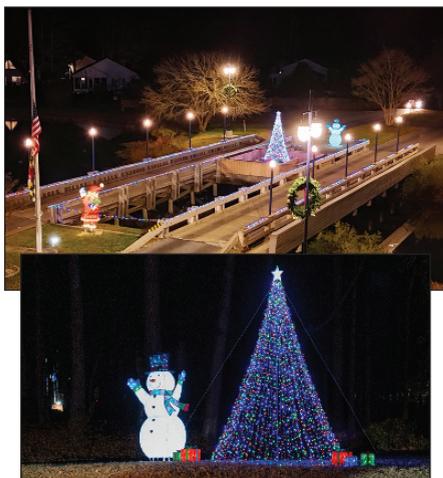
"With the algae growing, and feces from the ducks and geese contaminating the water, this will help to clean some of that out," he said. "And they create a habitat and a refuge, providing structure and cover for small fish, tadpoles, frogs and turtles."

The planters also help beautify the landscape.

"There's an extra added bonus with the color, and they attract pollinators and birds, so it's its own little ecosystem and habitat," Howard said.

Looking at other future projects, Howard also wants to build a retaining wall and raise the flowerbeds at the Yacht Club entrance on Mumford's Landing Road.

"We come up with new ideas all the time, just driving around the community and looking at what's there," he said. "It's just a matter of finding the time."



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OPA honors staff during annual ceremony

The Ocean Pines Association on Dec. 21 honored five employees for their combined 70 years of service.

The brief recognition ceremony occurred during the annual staff holiday party at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club.

General Manager John Viola said recognizing staff is one of his favorite parts of the job.

“Ocean Pines is saying thank you, I certainly am saying thank you, and I know all the Department heads are very appreciative of the work that you do,” he said. “Everybody has done a really good job, and we are having a good year because of what you do for the team, day in and day out.”

Those honored were:

- **Ventrel Moore – five years**
- **Steve Phillips – five years**
- **Jonathan Brown – 10 years**
- **Kenneth “Butch” Kennedy – 20 years**
- **Kevin Goldberg – 30 years**



From left: Steve Phillips, Kenneth “Butch” Kennedy, Kevin Goldberg, Ventrel Moore, Jonathan Brown



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Guest column:

Preview of 2024 Session in Annapolis

By Mary Beth Carozza

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



The past couple of months have been focused on making the rounds in my three-county district of Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset, and preparing for the 2024 Maryland General Assembly, which runs from Jan. 10 - April 8, 2024.

While gearing up for the new session, I participated in nine local Christmas parades including Berlin and Ocean City, where the Stephen Decatur Seahawks football team led those parades as the 2023 2A State Champions. As a proud Decatur graduate, I was thrilled to see our Seahawks win the championship in person at Navy Stadium in Annapolis. I also enjoyed seeing many Ocean Pines friends and residents at the annual Hometown Tree Lighting, and I want to thank all the volunteers and organizations that made it such a magical winter wonderland.

With the new session, I have sponsored commonsense, bipartisan crime legislation, which holds repeat offenders and violent juveniles accountable to increase the safety of our communities. Over the past year, key constituencies including our schools, faith-based groups, small businesses, public safety organizations, and many people from across the State of Maryland have been demanding that real action be taken to reduce violent crime and juvenile crime. With Gov. Moore indicating his interest in moving on crime legislation that increases accountability, there is ample opportunity to pass meaningful crime bills this session.

I also have joined with Del. Wayne Hartman in sponsoring legislation to ensure the family of Wicomico Deputy Sheriff Glenn Hilliard is exempt from paying taxes on the death benefit, which was provided to them after Corporal Hilliard was killed in the line of duty by a repeat, violent offender. The Hilliard family lives in Worcester County.

As a member of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee, I will continue to use my committee position to advocate for more local flexibility and local decision-making. I was humbled and grateful to be the recipient of the Maryland Association of Counties' Legislative Recognition Award as a staunch advocate for local governments. With the state facing increased budget challenges, I will fight for policies that ensure fairness for our shore communities.

For example, I recently participated in a hearing before the Interagency Commission on School Construction to request state funding for the Buckingham Elementary Replacement School in Berlin, which is the largest Title I school in Worcester County and with approximately 60% of students qualifying for free and reduced meals. The community of Buckingham Elementary School (BES) has been patiently waiting for nearly 20

years while a new Ocean City Elementary School was built in 2005 and a new Showell Elementary School was completed in 2020.

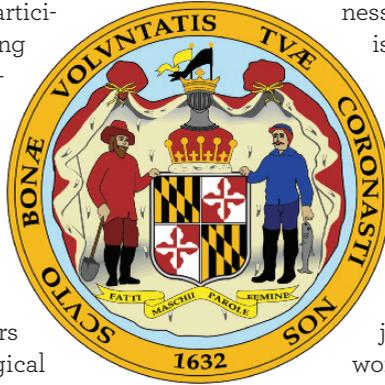
We are basing our request on facts, figures, and fairness to secure state funding for BES, and believe it is a reasonable request, especially factoring in that Worcester County has only received \$14.8 million in state school construction funding over the past 10 years, which is a mere 0.37% of the total state construction funding dispersed throughout all of Maryland counties that has gone to Worcester County.

The new Buckingham Elementary Replacement School is so much more than just a building. It is a special place to teach, work, and learn, a sentiment that is shared by the entire Buckingham community. It is only fair that our Buckingham students and families have the same type of high-quality learning experience as our surrounding schools.

Also, I have continued my work as a member of the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission, examining ways to reduce skill shortages in high-demand occupations and provide affordable training for career pathways for young people. Local workforce organizations have been sharing recommendations to make it easier for employers to sponsor youth apprenticeships and school to work programs, as well as giving local school systems more options to reach the Kirwan Blueprint goal of 45% of high school graduates entering registered apprenticeship programs. These recommendations may lead to legislative, regulatory, and budgetary actions this session.

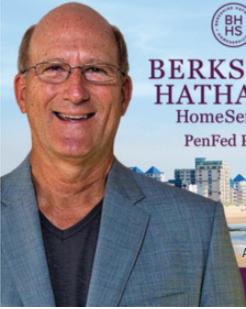
In closing, I want to congratulate new Ocean Pines Fire Chief Joey Widgeon and President Joe Enste upon election to their new leadership positions, and thank past Chief Steve Grunewald and President Dave Van Gasbeck for their dedicated service and for staying involved in OPVFD leadership. I am looking forward to working with the leadership team on priority public safety issues including the new Ocean Pines South Station. This new station will improve safety for the overall Ocean Pines community and also will help with retention and recruitment of personnel and volunteers, which is a statewide challenge that we will prioritize this session.

I hope to hear from you during the 2024 Legislative Session in Annapolis. If you would like to receive my weekly session updates, you can go to my website: marybethcarozza.com, and selecting the tab "Weekly Session Updates - 2024." You are always invited to visit with me in Annapolis or we can meet here in Ocean Pines or the district. I remain humbled and grateful to represent the residents of Ocean Pines in the Maryland State Senate.



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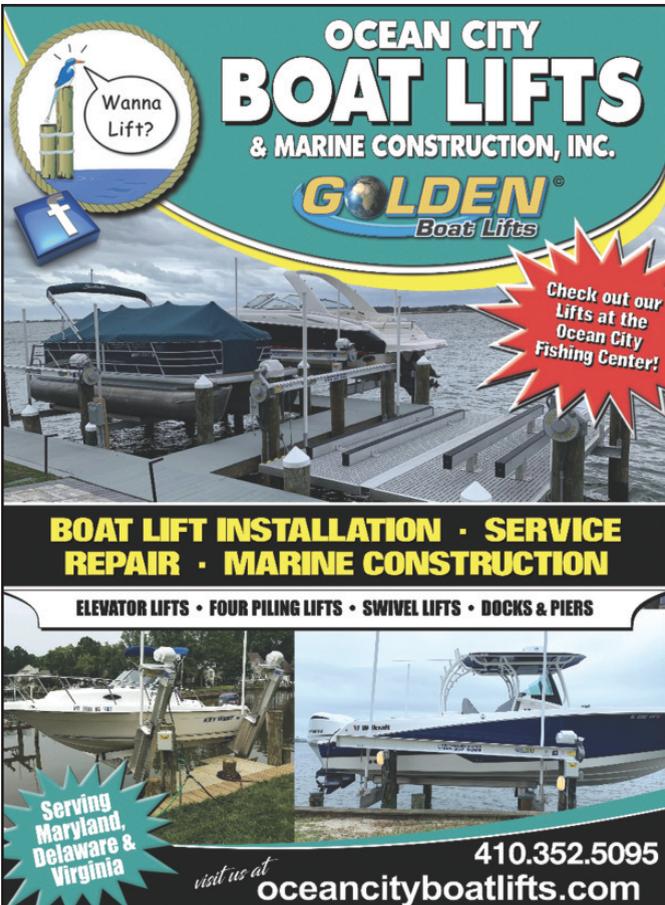
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Guest column:

Preparing for the legislative session

By **Wayne Hartman**

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



Happy New Year to my friends in Ocean Pines! I hope that your holiday season was full of joy.

As I write to you, legislators across the state and I are currently preparing for Maryland's 446th legislative session. Over the past few months, I have met with our local municipal leaders, regional medical establishments, and educational stakeholders to discuss the legislative priorities that are important to Worcester and Wicomico Counties. I sincerely look forward to sponsoring multiple pieces of legislation and securing funds that will have a meaningful impact on our community.

Enhancing public safety and addressing juvenile crime has been at the forefront of my conversations with local leaders. Maryland has witnessed an unfortunate increase in specific acts of juvenile crime following the passage of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022. This bill was passed on party lines with the Majority Party's support. The change in statute prevents juvenile offenders that are under the age of 13 from being criminally charged with most offenses. For example, juvenile carjackings in Maryland have increased by 85% and statewide handgun violations were up 220% between 2021 and 2023. Additionally, bad actors and gangs are now leveraging these changes in juvenile law to use children for committing crimes. This lack of accountability is a detriment to the upbringing and safety of our future generations. As a result, I along with the other members of the House Minority Caucus leadership team have drafted and are offering the Juvenile Justice Restoration Act of 2024. This legislation will restore balance in the juvenile justice system by requiring juveniles younger than 13 who use firearms in the commission of a crime, to come under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court system. The bill also provides that upon a juvenile's third arrest for a crime not that is not considered a "crime of violence", the juvenile will then come under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court system. This would help eliminate the "catch and release" of juveniles that are being repeatedly apprehended for committing nonviolent crimes such as car theft.

To further enhance public safety, I am once again co-sponsoring the Gun Theft Felony Act and the Violent Firearm Offenders Act. The Gun Theft Felony Act classifies the theft of a firearm as a felony; it establishes a penalty of 5 years imprisonment for a first offense and 10 years for a second or subsequent offense. The Violent Firearm Offenders Act increases penalties for committing crimes with an illegal firearm from 3 years to 5 years of prison time and raises the maximum fine from \$2,500 to \$10,000. It also repeals the unconscionable "drug dealer loophole" in which drug dealers who use a firearm in the commission of a felony

receive special treatment and are not charged with a crime of violence. Furthermore, this bill creates penalties for individuals who sell or give someone a gun knowing that they will use it to commit a crime. Both pieces of legislation are reasonable and measured approaches for targeting those who use illegal guns to commit horrible acts. Additionally, the House Minority Caucus and I are also introducing the Drug-Free Roadways Act and the Safe Communities Act of 2024. The Drug-Free Roadways Act will remove the prohibition on law enforcement from stopping and searching vehicles due to the odor of cannabis. The Safe Communities Act will change Maryland's system of diminution credits as it pertains to those who commit crimes of violence.

Many constituents have contacted me to find relief and discuss solutions regarding Maryland's new reserve study requirements for governing bodies of Homeowners Associations & Condominium Owners Associations. This mandate is a result of HB-107 which was passed in 2022 and came into effect on October 1, 2023. To alleviate pressure from these requirements, I am introducing legislation that will exempt associations containing 6 or less units from the state-wide reserve study requirements. This bill also extends the number of years from 3 to 5 in which governing bodies are required to attain the reserve funding levels recommended in their initial reserve study. I will keep you updated as the bill progresses through the legislative process this session.

Promoting tourism and travel in Maryland is a priority for me as a legislator. Earlier last year, I was fortunate to be appointed to the Maryland Tourism Development Board by House Speaker Adrienne Jones. I am grateful for this opportunity to increase Maryland's tourism rates and overall competitiveness. District 38C plays a huge role in our state's economy, and it is important to me that it remains that way. I am looking forward to returning to Annapolis on behalf of District 38C, it is truly an honor. Along with proudly serving as your State Delegate, I will continue to serve as Chair of the Worcester County Delegation and as Chief Deputy Minority Whip. My goal within these roles is to further expand opportunities for our district, improve public safety throughout Maryland, and advocate for fiscal responsibility at the State level.

Please feel free to contact me or my staff at wayne.hartman@house.state.md.us or call 410-841-3356 if you ever need assistance when working with State agencies. From my family to yours, we wish you a prosperous and healthy new year!



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Take your health into your own hands this New Year with Worcester Health

Guest column by the Worcester County Health Department

Worcester County Health Department encourages residents to participate in year-long physical activity challenge

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health, as it improves brain health, reduces the risk of disease, and even strengthens bones. To help you reach your 2024 health and fitness goals, the Worcester County Health Department is hosting a year-long *Just Walk Worcester Community Challenge*. The *Just Walk* program member that achieves the most miles of physical activity between Jan. 1, 2024 and Dec. 31, 2024, will be crowned the *Just Walk Worcester Champion 2024*.

Just Walk is a free, self-directed, self-reported, physical activity program. Members report their miles or minutes of physical activity each month to earn various prizes.

To participate in the challenge, report your miles or minutes of physical activity each month during 2024. If you are a current member of the *Just Walk* program you are automatically enrolled in this year-long challenge. If you are not a member of the *Just Walk* program, you can sign-up at justwalkworcester.org or call the Worcester County Health Department at 410-632-1100, ext. 1110 and a *Just Walk* enrollment packet will be mailed to your home address. Once registered for the program, participate in whatever type of activity you enjoy, and turn in your miles or minutes of movement each month. Physical activity can be reported through the *Just Walk* website or by calling 410-632-1100 ext. 1110.

For more information about the *Just Walk Worcester Community Challenge 2024*, the *Just Walk* program, and other no-cost healthy lifestyle programs, please call 410-632-1100 ext. 1108 or visit worcesterhealth.org.

Strengthen your family with Worcester Health's new program Healthy Worcester Families

Get the whole family involved in adopting a healthier lifestyle with the Worcester County Health Department's new program *Healthy Worcester Families*. This nine-week

program uses an evidence-based curriculum to help strengthen the family bond and communication through group learning and activities. The program is designed for youth ages 7-17 and their parents/guardians to attend together.

Sessions are two hours per week over the 9-week program, and a free family dinner will be provided at the start of every session. Families can receive prizes and other incentives for participation in the program. Topics covered will include communication skills, healthy behaviors, financial literacy, and other skills to strengthen the family connection.

A past participant of the *Healthy Worcester Families* program said that, because of participating, their family will continue to "eat healthy, spend quality time together, and communicate better."

The winter session will begin on Tuesday, Jan. 9 from 5-7 p.m. at Worcester Youth and Family (124 North Main Street, Suite C, Berlin, MD 21811).

A Pocomoke class location is being planned and will be available within the year. To register your family, visit <https://forms.gle/YW4odFfJqssgdcpq8> or call Lynn Suarez at 410-632-1100 ext.1109.

Worcester County's Initiative to Preserve Families, the Local Management Board for Worcester County, and Maryland's Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, on behalf of the Children's Cabinet, funded this project under award number CCIF-2024-220596. All points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of any State or Federal agency.

Kick the habit this New Year

The Worcester County Health Department's free fall adult Quit Smoking and Vaping classes begin in October. Worcester Health is committed to helping smokers and vapers establish new behavior patterns that lead to a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Join one of the smoking cessation classes available throughout Worcester County starting next month:

- **Tuesdays, 5-6 p.m. (Jan. 9 to March 26) at the Snow Hill Health Center, 6040 Public Landing Rd.**
- **Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m. (Jan. 10 to March 27) at the Atlantic Club, 11827 Ocean Gateway**
- **Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. (Jan. 11 to March 28) at the Pocomoke Health Center 400-A Walnut St.**

For more information or to register, call 410-632-1100 Ext. 1103.



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Guest column:

Winter storm preparation

By Mike Malandro, President & CEO
Choptank Electric Cooperative



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It's cold outside - we're bundled up too, and our lineworkers are working outside 24/7 to keep your electricity on. Ice and winter weather increases the potential for longer outages, which are rare but always a possibility. The key to making an outage as comfortable as possible for you and your family is being prepared.

The first step to take is having an emergency kit ready. Essential items to include in your emergency kit are water, nonperishable food for a minimum of three days, a first-aid kit, flashlights and batteries, medications, charged cell phones, coolers and ice to preserve food, and blankets or a safe, alternative heat source. It is also beneficial to fill your car with gas before a storm and your bathtub with water for bathroom use, especially if you have well water.

Generators can be helpful when the power goes out. However, when using a generator, never run it inside your home or garage. They produce carbon monoxide fumes, which can be deadly. Generators and fuel should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows and doors. Installing carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home will also keep you and your family protected from possible carbon monoxide poisoning. Learn more about storm preparation at choptankelectric.coop/prepare.

Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line. The main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Reporting your outage is helpful to our line crews when restoring power because it verifies the lowest pole number and helps the lineworkers decide where to go to search for the cause of the outage.

If you experience an outage this winter, call or text "OUT" to 1-800-410-4790. Outages can also be reported on your SmartHub app and monitored on our website at choptankelectric.coop/outage-map.

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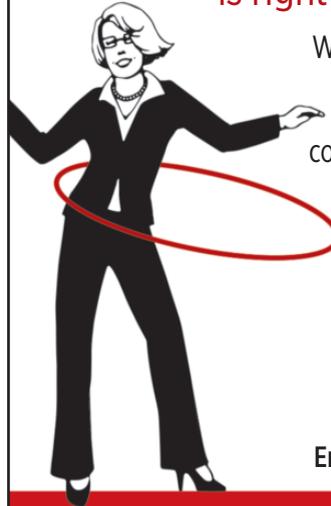


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Message from the OPA BOARD PRESIDENT



Richard Farr
OPA President

Fortunate to be living here

As the holidays are behind us and as we are entering 2024, let's all reflect on our wonderful Ocean Pines community and understand how fortunate we are to be living here.

The current Board of Directors has been working very hard in partnership with our General Manager and his staff to enhance our awesome amenities. Reinvesting in our community has been the Board of Directors' priority, with an increase of the holiday decorations, repainting our legacy signs throughout the community, repairing and replacing more

community mailboxes, continued bulkhead replacement, a new Racquet Sports building, Golf Course irrigation and expansion of the Yacht Club Tiki Bar, just to name a few. All these improvements and enhancements in our community will be enjoyed by our residents in 2024.

Our General Manager and his team continue to keep the association in a very strong financial position. Our departments continue to provide outstanding service to our community, along with our Police Department and Fire/EMS services. Congratulations to the OPVFD for new leadership with the selection of a new Fire Chief and President, and congratulations on the graduation of a new Ocean Pines Police officer from the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy.

Once again, I would like to thank all those individuals who volunteer their time to serve on our committees, and the Board members for ensuring that Ocean Pines remains a financially stable and safe community for all our membership and their family.

As winter is upon us, we all must remember how cold it can get here at the beach and how that can affect our property. A few reminders: protect all your outdoor water pipes with insulation. Drain and cover outdoor faucets. Schedule a full HVAC system inspection to make sure all equipment is in good working order, and don't forget to change filters. Plan for any snow removal on roofs and gutters, as this can lead to leaky roofs and damaged gutters and downspouts if not done. Check the operation of your smoke detectors and change the batteries as needed. Lastly, if you have a wood burning fireplace, have it professionally cleaned and inspected to ensure safety for your family and the community.

If you want official news and updates on what's going on in Ocean Pines, there is ONLY ONE official news source at www.oceanpines.org - or visit our Facebook page "Ocean Pines Association," Instagram @oceanpinesmaryland, X (Twitter) @OceanPinesMD, and Threads @oceanpinesmaryland.

I wish all our membership and their families a safe winter season.



photo by Bob McKinley

Ocean Pines Association BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is a legislative policy-setting body of the Ocean Pines community. The affairs & business of the Association are managed by a Board of 7 & the terms of the Directors will be for 3 years & until their respective successors are duly elected policy-setting. The Board of Directors appoints a General Manager to oversee the executive management of the operations of the Association. **Email all members at directors@oceanpines.org.**



PRESIDENT

Elected in 8/2021, 1st term ends in 2024

Richard Farr
rfarr@oceanpines.org
410-390-1425



VICE PRESIDENT

Elected in 8/2022, 1st term ends in 2025

Stuart Lakernick
slakernick@oceanpines.org
215-869-6343



TREASURER

Elected in 8/2022, 1st term ends in 2025

Monica Rakowski
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410-493-4202



SECRETARY

Elected in 8/2023, 1st term ends in 2026

John Latham
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410-404-8907



DIRECTOR

Elected in 8/2022, 1st term ends in 2025

Steve Jacobs
sjacobs@oceanpines.org
240-595-0605



DIRECTOR

Elected in 8/2023, 1st term ends in 2026

Elaine Brady
ebrady@oceanpines.org
443-614-1576



DIRECTOR

Elected in 8/2023, 1st term ends in 2024

Jeff Heavner
jheavner@oceanpines.org
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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT



GENERAL MANAGER

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OPA revives iconic Yacht Club entrance ‘sail’ sign

Ocean Pines recently announced the successful rehabilitation of the iconic “sail” entranceway sign at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club.

The sign has been part of the entrance at the intersection of Ocean Parkway and Mumford’s Landing Road for nearly 50 years.

General Manager John Viola said the project, a collaboration between Ocean Pines Public Works and an outside contractor, reinforces the Association’s commitment to ongoing maintenance and preserving the rich heritage of the community.

Quick facts:

- The restoration involved power washing and a thorough cleaning of the sail sign, plus the two Mumford’s Landing signs, by Public Works.
- An outside contractor repaired rotted wood and applied a fresh coat of paint.
- Ocean Pines Public Works restored the lettering on the signs.

Historical significance:

- The origin of the sail sign is believed to trace back to a concept drawing featured in the original Ocean Pines informational booklet created by developer Boise Cascade. This symbol has stood as a point of reference for residents and visitors alike for nearly five decades, guiding them to the Yacht Club.

A trip down memory lane:

- The Yacht Club and Marina were first envisioned in 1969.
- A groundbreaking ceremony occurred in 1973, with the Yacht Club and Marina’s completion in 1975.
- The sign was likely put up in 1975, to go with the opening of the new building.



Before



After

John Talbot, an original Boise Cascade salesperson and longtime community resident, fondly recalls the installation of the iconic sign.

“It was a point of reference as an owner and you couldn’t help but notice it. It was just another added feature to tell people where the Yacht Club was going to be,” he said.

Talbot vividly remembers the excitement surrounding the Yacht Club’s opening and said it was a hot topic of conversation throughout the community.

Marlene Ott, an Ocean Pines resident for more than 50 years, noted that the entranceway also graces the cover of the *History of Ocean Pines, Maryland* book written by Bud Rogner.

“I recall that it has always been there,” she said, adding the sign has always symbolized the Yacht Club for residents.

Marvin Steen, one of the original developers and a resident for more five decades, also acknowledged the enduring presence of the sign.

“It’s been there a long time!” he said. “The maintenance on those signs over the last few years has been fantastic. They’ve been looking really good.”

A positive transformation

The restoration of the sign not only preserves an iconic landmark, but has also visually improved its prominence.

“Visually, the improvements made them more pronounced,” Talbot said. “I personally say that was a plus factor.”

Viola said the Association will continue to focus on maintenance and upkeep of the community. Up next, he said Public Works will work to reproduce the original “Yacht Club” sign and sailboat that once stood at the entranceway.

“Ocean Pines takes pride in its rich history, and we have an ongoing commitment to preserving our heritage,” Viola said. “The successful restoration of the signs at the Yacht Club is a testament to that dedication.”



The original signs were installed circa 1975



Before



After

OPA presents commendation to state champion SDHS football team

The Ocean Pines Association Board on Nov. 16 presented a plaque and commendation to the Stephen Decatur High School Football team for winning their first-ever state championship.

The SDHS Seahawks finished the season a perfect 14-0, capping off the campaign with a 21-13 win over the Huntingtown Hurricanes on Nov. 30 to capture the MPSSAA 2A Football State Championship title.

OPA President Rick Farr presented the commendation, which read:

WHEREAS, the Stephen Decatur High School Football Team has exhibited unparalleled dedication, resilience, and exceptional sportsmanship throughout the season; and

WHEREAS, their relentless pursuit of excellence and unwavering team spirit led them to an extraordinary victory, clinching their first-ever State Championship; and

WHEREAS, the perseverance, talent, and outstanding leadership displayed by each member of the team, coaching staff, and all those who supported them have brought immense pride and honor to the Stephen Decatur High School and the community of Ocean Pines; and their triumph stands as a testament to the power of teamwork, determination, and commitment to achieving greatness both on and off the field;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it proclaimed by the Ocean Pines Board of Directors that we commend and celebrate the remarkable achievement of the Stephen Decatur High School Football Team for their historic win of the State Championship.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the players, coaches, staff, families, and supporters whose dedication and unwavering support contributed to this remarkable success.

Seahawks Head Football Coach Jake Coleman said it was an honor to be recognized. He added that “an undefeated season is great,” but equally impressive was the resilience



shown by his team over their last two games.

Coleman reflected on the 2022 season that ended with a 40-33 loss to Milford Mill Academy, despite having the lead with just 42 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

“That, I think, told us a lot about ourselves,” he said. “We took what we learned ... and what we needed to do, and then we approached it for the next 365 days to make those improvements.”

The team once again met Milford Mill late in the season, on Nov. 24. This time, Decatur prevailed 35-34.

“We found ourselves behind after having an early lead. And these guys stuck together, they fought it out, and they ended up defeating the defending state champion,” Coleman said. “That victory right there just says so much about the group of guys and their commitment to each other, their passion and love for each other.”

A week later, the Seahawks faced off against the Huntingtown Hurricanes for the state championship.

“We had our share of calls that didn’t go our way, but these guys never wavered. They stuck together. They are true champions,” Coleman said.

After the title game, Coleman said he talked to his team about what it means to be “a true champion.”

“We love that you guys recognize us ... but we want to be humble in these moments and be thankful and be grateful, and we want to conduct ourselves so that we continue to honor you and the community.”

Coleman also thanked members of the community for donating to a Go Fund Me that raised more than \$20,000 for state championship rings for all the players and coaches.

“We just appreciate all of your support ... it’s been amazing,” he said. “And now we’re going to try and go back-to-back!”



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John Viola
General Manager

Operations updates: capital purchase requests, beautification, and budget news

Golf irrigation: Among the capital requests presented during the Dec. 16 Board meeting were \$934,000 for phase one of a new Golf Course irrigation system. Equipment for the old system ranges from 30-50 years old, and the system is basically antiquated.

Phase one of the project will include the pump station, fairways one and nine, and the driving range.

Work is tentatively set to start next November, with the goal of finishing by March 2025.

Electronic signs: Also among the capital requests was \$22,118 for an electronic sign at the North Gate.

The Board instructed the GM to pursue pricing for the sign in October, and a workgroup was formed to take on the project. Members included Viola, Public Relations Director Josh Davis, Public Works Director Eddie Wells, IT Manager Keith Calabrese, and Senior Executive Office Manager Linda Martin.

A request for proposals went out on Nov. 22 and three bidders responded.

There was a demonstration at the administration building the other day and it was pretty impressive. The timeline to install the sign is about six-to-eight weeks.

More Racquet Sports upgrades: The latest round of Racquet Center upgrades will include a renovation of the pro shop and restrooms. The \$140,000 project will likely start with permitting in early 2024.

The Racquet Sports Committee recommended the renovation, and former Board member Frank Brown prepared architectural sketches. He has worked on many recent designs for OPA.

Frank has always answered the call for me, which has helped us with the contractors, with the engineers and with the architects, and it's definitely saved us money.

The work will use the same basic playbook that made the new Golf Clubhouse and Police Station renovation successful.

I'm excited about it and I have the team in place to do it. It's a hybrid between our team, as well as two outside contractors who I look at as part of the team.

Tiki Bar expansion: Also on the capital purchase list was a \$197,500 expansion of the Yacht Club tiki bar.

It's a very popular place, [but] it needs enhancement so we can fulfill the customer requirements – and right now it doesn't.

Again, the work will be done by a hybrid of Public Works and an outside contractor. We hope to have construction wrapped before Memorial Day.

Veterans Memorial pavilion: Last on the capital purchase list was a new pavilion for the Worcester County Veterans Memorial in Ocean Pines. That will include a new shade structure to replace the existing gazebo, with work being done by an outside contractor.

The Veterans Memorial Foundation will provide \$50,000 for the project, with Ocean Pines contributing an additional \$50,000.



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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 OPA administrative offices will be closed for:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day:
Mon, Jan. 15

Presidents' Day:
Mon, Feb. 19

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Marketing & Public Relations Dir.

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FINANCE DEPARTMENT



SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

YEAR-TO-DATE 11/30/2023

OPERATING ACCOUNT SUMMARY

UNAUDITED

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)			
REVENUES			
Assessments	8,438	8,410	28
Grants	553	562	(9)
Amenities (Net)	6,367	5,799	588
Recreation & Parks	322	314	8
Other fees and Income	<u>1,069</u>	<u>772</u>	<u>297</u>
Total Revenues	16,749	15,837	912
Add: Budgeted Surplus Transfer	650	650	-
Less: Transfers to Reserve Accounts	<u>(3,614)</u>	<u>(3,396)</u>	<u>(218)</u>
Net Operating Revenues	13,785	13,091	694
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Administration & Management	1,372	1,374	2
Amenities	4,064	3,746	(318)
Recreation & Parks	556	579	23
Police	977	1,160	183
Fire / EMS	589	589	-
Public Works / CPI	1,012	1,185	173
General Maintenance	<u>452</u>	<u>409</u>	<u>(43)</u>
Total Operating Expenses	9,022	9,042	20
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	4,763	4,049	714
NEW CAPITAL	-	-	-
NET	4,763	4,049	714

North Gate banners: Among the many recent holiday beautification efforts were new banners for the light poles along the North Gate Bridge.

Those have very been well received, and there are plans to design and implement additional banners promoting Ocean Pines amenities through all four seasons.

Marketing Coordinator Nancy MacCubbin did the design work for the new banners, and she's done a great job capturing the vision that I had. We want to highlight all our amenities and she really captured that for us.

Throughout Ocean Pines, additional holiday decorations this year included seven large trees, more lighting for the North Gate Bridge, wreaths and flags on light poles, and about 25,000 Christmas lights.

Walking trails: Staff and I recently evaluated the Robin Hood bike and walking trail with Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Safety Coalition Chairperson Patti Stevens.

Based on that meeting, staff will remove roots, add mulch to the trail, and apply stone dust along the edges of the roadway. Viola said five safety signs were ordered for walking paths that cross over streets. Those areas will also be striped with crosswalks.

Thank you to Police Chief Tim Robinson for his work on the project.

Beach Club security: Based on discussion with Association President Rick Farr, the team has researched how to limit entry to the Beach Club Bathrooms.

The IT department sought bids for new door controls, card readers, and cameras, and costs came back at roughly \$5,400.

The IT Department, led by Keith Calabrese, is a very strong team and the support they've given us for these types of projects has been considerable.

Renewed trash contract: Staff recommended renewing the agreement with Republic Services to continue trash collection for Ocean Pines. Three bids were received for trash services, and all three included options for year-round and seasonal pickup.

This will be an exclusive contract, so they will be the only contractor allowed in Ocean Pines.

The new agreement will also include additional leaf pickup dates.

Budget and finance updates: The Association had \$137,000 budget favorability in November, led by \$48,000 favorability by Police and \$39,000 favorability by Public Works. Golf led all amenities with \$24,000 favorability, followed by \$12,000 at Aquatics, \$10,000 at the Clubhouse Grille, and \$5,000 at the Yacht Club.

Year-to-date favorability is now approximately \$715,000.

Upcoming review sessions for the proposed fiscal 2024-2025 budget will start with Budget and Finance Committee review on Jan. 3-4. Board review is slated for Jan. 11-12, with a town hall tentatively set for Feb. 7.

Staff worked using a "bottoms-up" approach, but I also took a "bottoms-down" and east-west and west-east approach

to review all the angles. That's important, from an analysis side. We do look forward - I have this whole team engaged to look forward for over the next two-to-four years, and we have a plan in place.

The next fiscal-year budget will continue robust spending for bulkhead, drainage and road issues; address overdue infrastructure items like Golf Course irrigation; and include statutory wage increases.

Other items: If anyone has additional questions, please email the Info Team at info@oceanpines.org or call 410-641-7717 during normal business hours.



Linda Martin
Senior Executive
Office Manager

Reminder of new leaf policy

As we go into the winter season, everyone is still dealing with the never-ending falling leaves.

As advertised in our newsletters, on the OPA website, in social media posts, and even on several occasions in the monthly GM report, ditch leaves are no longer being vacuumed from the street and need to be bagged in paper bags where they will be either picked up by Public Works or by Republic (if you

this new policy and are raking either the ditch leaves or even the leaves from their entire yard onto the road. This becomes a safety issue for vehicles driving down the road and pedestrians walking or riding their bikes.

Please be aware that you will be issued a violation notice and, if not removed within 15 days, the leaf pile could be removed by the Ocean Pines contractor and the charge for this service will be put against your assessment.

Avoid the letter and avoid the charges - be a good neighbor and bag up your leaves.

For questions about violations, or for any questions you have about any subject pertaining to OPA, please contact info@oceanpines.org. We are here to assist you with your questions and concerns!

have trash service).

However, there are still several homes that are ignoring



Eddie Wells
Director

Message from **PUBLIC WORKS**

Prepare for winter weather

As the impending winter storm season approaches, Ocean Pines Police and Public Works are asking residents to refrain from parking vehicles on the roads when snowfall is predicted.

Public Works Director Eddie Wells said moving cars and trucks off the

When the snow begins to fall, clearing walkways and driveways can help prevent slips and falls, while using salt or sand can help melt any ice and provide better traction.

Also, don't forget your pets! Make sure to limit their exposure to the elements. Pets, just like people, are prone to frostbite when temperatures drop below freezing.

If there are severe storm conditions, check in on elderly neighbors if you're able, or call the Ocean Pines Police Department at 410-641-7747 if there is a concern.

If you do have to go out on the road, always keep a safe distance between vehicles. Watching for lower speed limits and slowing down on icy roads can significantly reduce the risk of accidents.

Most of all, stay informed. Visit www.weather.gov for the latest alerts in your area. A winter weather "advisory" means be aware, a "watch" means be prepared, and a "warning" means take action against an approaching storm.

Closings related to the Ocean Pines Association will be posted on www.oceanpines.org.

A little preparation can go a long way in keeping you, your family and your home safe this winter.



Nobie Violante
Manager

road, especially on side streets, will make it much easier for snow plows to do their job.

"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," Wells said.

Residents are advised to stock up on essential supplies ahead of any major storm. That includes nonperishable food, water, batteries, and necessary medications at any time when there may be power outages or impassible roads because of severe weather. It's also a good idea to have extra blankets and warm clothing available in cases when significantly low temperatures could occur.

If there is a power outage, staying warm becomes a priority. Use an alternative heat source like a fireplace or a properly ventilated generator, and make sure that mobile devices are charged so you can continue to communicate with loved ones.

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PUBLIC WORKS

OPA doubles down on holiday displays

Ocean Pines Public Works led an effort to make the community merry and bright this past holiday season.

General Manager John Viola said spending was increased for holiday decorations this year, thanks to a reallocation and repurposing of budget funds.

That included about 25,000 lights, seven large and illuminated Christmas trees, and live trees at both the north and south gates.

Public Works also put in more than 50 live trees at White Horse Park, ahead of the annual Hometown Christmas tree lighting.

The community response to the increase in decorations was overwhelmingly positive.

"I'm just so impressed with the decorations and the whole place," resident Peggy Sedor said. "I rode through yesterday and I said, 'this is the best place in the world to live!' It's just

beautiful and the decorations are just exquisite. Everybody is saying it."

Public Works Director Eddie Wells credited Tony Howard and his team for putting up decorations around the community.

"Tony is a valued employee, and he has a great eye for landscaping and decorating," Wells said. "He and his crew have done an awesome job with everything."

Viola said roughly double the holiday decorations went up this past Christmas.

"We received many, many positive comments about all the new decorations, and it's a credit to Public Works," he said.

"We hope everyone in the Ocean Pines community enjoyed all the new displays, and we hope everyone had a very merry Christmas and holiday."

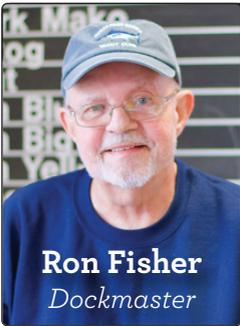


Message from **MARINAS & WATER SPORTS**

Get on the waiting list for a boat slip

The marinas remain closed for the season. In the meantime, if you are interested in renting a slip at the Yacht Club marina or at the Swim and Racquet Club marina for the 2024 season or if you have questions regarding the use of our boat

slips or ramps, please call the Ocean Pines Marina at 410-641-7447 or Recreation and Parks at 410-641-7052. Although we carry a waiting list for boat slips, it is best to submit an application so that we have your contact information.



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Tim Robinson
Chief of Police

Ocean Pines Police encourages bicycle safety

Bicycling has become an increasingly popular way for local people to get outside, get moving and stay active, especially along the roughly nine-mile trek of Ocean Parkway.

Ocean Pines Police are asking bike riders to use caution along the roadway. Be aware of your surroundings, maintain a defensive

mindset, and always wear a well-fitting helmet.

Assume that drivers may not see you and be on the lookout for potential hazards. And refrain from distractions like texting or listening to music that diverts attention from the road.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers the following additional safety tips when riding a bicycle on the road:

- **Go With the Traffic Flow.** Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow - not against it.
- **Obey All Traffic Laws.** A bicycle is a vehicle and you're a driver. When you ride in the street, you are required to obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings, including stop signs.

- **Yield to Traffic When Appropriate.** Almost always, drivers on a smaller road must yield (wait) for traffic on a major or larger road. If there is no stop sign or traffic signal and you are coming from a smaller roadway (out of a driveway, from a sidewalk, a bike path, etc.), you must slow down and look to see if the way is clear before proceeding. This also means yielding to pedestrians who have already entered a crosswalk.
- **Be Predictable.** Ride in a straight line, not in and out of cars. Signal your moves to others.
- **Stay Alert at All Times.** Use your eyes AND ears. Watch out for potholes, cracks, wet leaves, storm grates, railroad tracks, or anything that could make you lose control of your bike. You need your ears to hear traffic and avoid dangerous situations; don't wear a headset when you ride.
- **Look Before Turning.** When turning left or right, always look behind you for a break in traffic, then signal before making the turn. Watch for left- or right-turning traffic.
- **Watch for Parked Cars.** Ride far enough out from the curb to avoid the unexpected from parked cars (like doors opening, or cars pulling out).

For more information on bicycle safety, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety.

Safety tips for pedestrians: Use caution when walking at night

As the sun rises and sets earlier during the wintertime, many Ocean Pines residents are now walking their dogs or just taking a walk in the total darkness. Because of those conditions, pedestrians who wear dark clothing can be difficult for motorists to see.

Ocean Pines Police are asking nighttime walkers to carry a flashlight and wear light-colored clothing or a reflective vest.

Below are some additional safety tips for pedestrians and dog walkers during these darker, colder months:

- **Visibility is Key:** Make sure both you and your furry friend are visible to others. Use reflective gear: a reflective leash, collar, or vest for your dog, and wear reflective clothing or accessories yourself. A glowing collar or a light clipped to your dog's leash can make it much easier for passing vehicles to spot you.
- **Stick to Familiar Paths:** Nighttime can change the appearance of familiar routes. Choose well-lit paths and roads you know well to avoid unexpected hazards. If that's not possible, carry a flashlight or consider a headlamp for hands-free illumination.
- **Stay Alert:** Keep an eye out for potential dangers. While your dog might be exploring with enthusiasm, be wary of stray objects, open grates, or uneven pavement. Stay attentive to your surroundings, including other

pedestrians or animals that might cause distress to your pet.

- **Mind Your Timing:** Plan your walks during early evening hours when visibility is better and there's still some natural light. If you have to go out later, stay vigilant and consider shorter routes. Remember, the quieter it is, the more aware you need to be.
- **Training Matters:** Make sure your dog responds to basic commands like "heel" and "stay" to maintain control in unexpected situations. Leash manners are crucial, especially in low-light conditions.
- **Buddy System:** Consider walking with a friend or in a group. This adds a layer of safety, and it can also make the experience more enjoyable.

With these tips in mind, enjoy your nighttime strolls knowing you've taken necessary precautions. A little preparation ensures your walks remain a pleasant ritual, even after the sun has gone down for the day.



OCEAN PINES POLICE DEPARTMENT

OPPD and Kiwanis partner to help support the Cricket Center, local families



In November, the Ocean Pines Police Department partnered with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City for a special “Shop with a Cop” pancake breakfast.

The event benefited the Cricket Center in Berlin, which is the only state-supported child advocacy center in Worcester County.

According to the Kiwanis, the Shop with a Cop event is a “partnership with Worcester County law enforcement agencies, giving children the chance to shop with a local law enforcement officer for holiday gifts for their families.”

Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson said it’s important for local law enforcement to support these types of projects.

“We’re very honored to partner with the Kiwanis to support a worthwhile endeavor like the Cricket Center,” he said. “Things like the Cricket Center are instrumental in helping to keep some of our vulnerable youth safe.”

For more information about the Kiwanis, visit www.kiwanisofopoc.org.



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OCEAN PINES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



Joe Enste

OPVFD President

The Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department is reminding residents to make their house numbers visible for firefighters and other emergency responders. This is especially important during a fire or a medical emergency, when seconds count.

“It’s important for firefighters to be able to quickly identify the address of a burning building,” Lt. Joe Enste, OPVFD president and

public information officer, said. “If the numbers are not visible, it can delay our response and make it more difficult to put out the fire or save a life.”

House numbers are also a requirement of Ocean Pines Association Architectural Review Committee guidelines.

Per section 500.2.A., “The street address house number shall be posted to be visible from the street. It may be displayed on the front of the house or on a sign in the front yard (Note: The house number is not the same as the lot and section number and can be obtained from the CPI Department office). House

Help OPVFD help you

numbers shall not be less than four (4) inches or no greater than eight (8) inches in height, a contrasting color, and visible from the street.”

While there are several ways to make house numbers visible, the fire department offers a fundraising opportunity to purchase a reflective 911 address sign. Each sign is constructed of aluminum, with green and white reflective material

and numbers that measures 6 by 18 inches. Signs with mounting posts cost \$60 (which includes free installation) or \$48 for just the sign.

It is important to remember to not plant shrubs or trees that will block the view of house numbers from the street.

“By making your address visible, you can help ensure that emergency responders can get to your home quickly and safely,” Enste said. “This could save your life or the life of a loved one.”

Download an order form at www.opvfd.com or call 410-641-8272 for more information.



Joey Widgeon

Fire Chief





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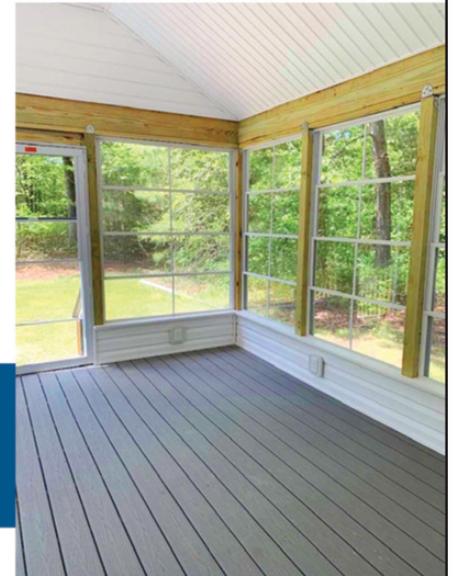
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Debbie Donahue
Director of
Recreation & Parks

Thank you for helping make Rec programs successful

As we approach the end of 2023, the Recreation and Parks Department would like to say a big thank you to the community, the community organizations, and the volunteers. We are thankful to have each of you taking part in Recreation Department programs and classes and volunteering for the different programs, so that we may be successful.

Thank you to the employees for their hard work from not only the Recreation Department, but for all those employees who work diligently throughout the year to make Ocean Pines a great place to live, work and play.

So, from all of us to all of you – THANK YOU!

Many winter indoor programs, including **Youth Basketball**, start in January. Youth Basketball games are on Saturdays, with practices set by the coaches, on weeknights. **COACHES ARE NEEDED!** If you are interested in coaching, please reach out to the Recreation Department. Registration has started, so please sign up soon.

Our **Men's Basketball League** starts in March. If you're an individual or a full team, give us a call and we will get you in. Wall-to-Wall Adult Coed Dodgeball is also open for registration starting in January. Give us a call for more information.

Zumba class continues throughout the year on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Let's not forget about Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates multiple sessions, and Line Dancing on Tuesday evenings.

The **Farmers & Artisans Market** is still going strong, and they will continue to have hours throughout the winter. Check the website for current market hours and winter hours, as they can change based on weather conditions.

There are many different **community organizations** within Ocean Pines looking for new members. Stop by and pick up a list of contact information, or give us a call and

request an email.

The **Pioneer'er Artisan Gift Shop** is open Saturdays and Sundays throughout the winter alongside the Farmers Market. Stop by the shop! The handmade items in this gift shop are amazing and looking for a new home.

For more information on programs and upcoming events, stop by or give us a call and we will be happy to show you all the great things the Recreation Department is doing this winter.

We are also working on spring and summer programs and events – stay tuned!

If you would like to volunteer, stop by, or give us a call. We can always use an extra hand and a friendly face.

Let's all stay safe and healthy. Happy New Year to all!



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Annual Hometown Christmas tree lighting at White Horse Park on Nov. 25



Hundreds attended the annual Hometown Christmas tree lighting at White Horse Park on Saturday, Nov. 25. The event featured live Christmas trees decorated by 50 local businesses and community groups. Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks hosts Hometown Christmas, with support from Ocean Pines Public Works, Police, and volunteers including the Delmarva Chorus. Trees and decorations at the park remained up through the end of December.





Michelle Hitchens

Aquatics Director

Dive into upcoming events!

We're keeping the heat on throughout the winter at our indoor Sports Core Pool, and hosting several exciting events:

FAMILY FUN NIGHT:
Feb. 3 • 5-8 p.m.

Join us for an evening filled with family fun! More details will be posted closer to the event date, so stay tuned to oceanpines.org for all the details and be sure follow the

may need to be extended for an additional period. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation to ensure a safe and pristine swimming environment.

EASTER EGG HUNT:
March 23 • Noon to 2 p.m.

Hop into spring with our Easter Egg Hunt on March 23! More information about this egg-citing event will be shared closer to the date, so stay tuned to oceanpines.org for all the details.

CALLING FUTURE LIFEGUARDS! April 2024 Class

Interested in becoming a certified lifeguard? Our April Lifeguarding Class is on the horizon! Please contact us at 410-641-5255 to reserve your spot on the list.

Ocean Pines Aquatics facebook page.

SPORTS CORE POOL CLOSINGS:
March 4 - 8

Please note that we'll be temporarily closing the pool from Monday, March 4 to Friday, March 8 for essential maintenance and semi-annual cleaning and draining; reopening Saturday, March 9. Due to the possibility of unforeseen issues arising during maintenance checks or cleaning, the closure duration of the Sports Core Pool



As always, we're dedicated to providing a safe and enjoyable swimming experience for our Ocean Pines community. Stay tuned for more updates on these events and other exciting happenings at Ocean Pines Aquatics. Plus, check out our aquatics programs on the next page.

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Sports Core Pool
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Successful class participants will be considered for employment.

2024 class dates will be announced in Spring!

CALL 410.641.5255 FOR INFO OR TO REGISTER

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WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 8:00am-8:50am

OF CLASSES: 18 classes (6 wks)

thru FEB 9

FEB 12 - MAR 29 No Class 3/4-3/8

APR 1 - MAY 10

FEE: Swim Member \$55; OP Resident \$65; Non-Resident \$81; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

SWIMMIN WIMMIN SHALLOW WATER ...& men!

WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 8:00am-8:50am

OF CLASSES: 18 classes (6 wks)

thru FEB 9

FEB 12 - MAR 29 No Class 3/4-3/8

APR 1 - MAY 10

FEE: Swim Member \$55; OP Resident \$65; Non-Resident \$81; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

TOTAL BODY FITNESS I

WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 10:00am-10:45am

OF CLASSES: 18 classes (6 wks)

THRU FEB 16 No Class 1/23-1/27

FEB 26 - APR 12 No Class 3/4-3/8

APR 22 - MAY 31

FEE: Swim Member \$88; OP Resident \$100; Non-Resident \$120; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

TOTAL BODY FITNESS II

WHEN: TUE / THU, 9:00am-9:45am

OF CLASSES: 12 classes (6 wks)

thru FEB 15 No Class 1/23-1/27

FEB 27 - APR 11 No Class 3/4-3/8

APR 23 - MAY 30

FEE: Swim Member \$59; OP Resident \$66; Non-Resident \$80; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

HYDRIDER WATER CYCLING

WHEN: MON / WED, 9:00am-9:40am 12 classes (6 wks)

thru FEB 12

FEB 26 - APR 10 No Class 3/4-3/11

APR 22 - MAY 29

WHEN: TUE / THU, 9:00am-9:45am 12 classes (6 wks)

JAN 16 - FEB 15

FEB 27 - APR 11 No Class 3/4-3/11

WHEN: TUE / THU, 10:00am-10:35am 12 classes (6 wks)

thru FEB 15 No Class 1/30-2/1

FEB 27 - APR 11 No Class 3/4-3/11

APR 23 - MAY 30

FEE: Swim Member \$90; OP Resident \$95; Non-Resident \$100; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$9; OP Resident \$11; Non-Resident \$13

EARLYBIRD LAP SWIM

30 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: MON-FRI, 6:00am-7:50am

JAN 29 - MAR 15 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 18 - APR 26

FEE: Swim Member, free; Res. \$65; Non-Res. \$78; **Drop-in:** \$8.

SHAPE UPS

WHEN: TUE / THU, 8:00am-8:50am

12 classes (6 wks)

thru JAN 18

JAN 30 - MAR 14 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 26 - MAY 2

FEE: Swim Member \$40; OP Resident \$50; Non-Resident \$65; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

WET WORKS I: DEEP WATER

18 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 9:30am-10:20am

thru JAN 19

JAN 29 - MAR 15 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 25 - MAY 3

WET WORKS II: SHALLOW WATER

WHEN: TUE / THU, 9:30am-10:20am

12 classes (6 wks)

thru JAN 18

JAN 30 - MAR 14 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 26 - APR 2

FEE: I: Swim Member \$60; OP Resident \$70; Non-Resident \$86; **II:** Swim Member \$44; OP Resident \$54; Non-Resident \$61; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

CREAKY JOINTS I

18 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 11:00am-11:50am

thru JAN 19

JAN 29 - MAR 15 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 25 - MAY 3

CREAKY JOINTS II

12 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: TUE / THU, 11:00am-11:50am

thru JAN 18

MAR 26 - MAY 5

FEE: I: Swim Member \$60; OP Resident \$70; Non-Resident \$86; **II:** Swim Member \$44; OP Resident \$54; Non-Resident \$61; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

AQUA YOGA

12 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: WED / FRI, 8:00am-8:45am

JAN 8 - FEB 16

FEB 19 - APR 5 No Class 3/4-3/8

FEE: Swim Member \$60; OP Resident \$70; Non-Resident \$86; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

AQUA BOOTCAMP

18 classes (6 wks)

WHEN: MON / WED / FRI, 6:00pm-6:45pm

thru JAN 19

JAN 29 - MAR 15 No Class 3/4-3/8

MAR 25 - MAY 3

FEE: Swim Member \$60; OP Resident \$70; Non-Resident \$86; **Drop-in:** Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

OCEAN PINES RACQUET CENTER



Tim Johnson
Racquet Sports
Director

Racquet Sports play going strong this winter

Plenty of lessons, court times available indoors and out

Platform tennis season is heating up! It is generally a winter sport, with our hardy members layering up against the cold and braving even the most adverse weather to get some play in. It's also a great time to join in on the fun, get some exercise, and socialize with your



This winter is also the perfect time to grab a paddle and join one of the most vibrant communities in Ocean Pines. We will be offering beginner pickleball classes at the Community Center in February, with "Meet the Newbies" sessions running for seven weeks, starting Feb. 1. If you are interested in learning the sport of pickleball, this is definitely the place to be!

For our first semester graduates, Newbies 2.0 will start on Thursday, Feb. 3 at 11 a.m. To register for indoor pickleball, call 410-641-7052.

neighbors and friends.

We plan to issue challenges to area clubs for a friendly series of matches in January and February. To help prep for that, we'll be hosting platform tennis lessons on Saturday mornings starting at 9:30 a.m. If you want to learn the game and prepare for some exciting winter competition, call 410-641-7228 for more details.

Pickleball will continue outdoor play as weather permits, including Wednesday shootouts from 1-3 p.m. Visit OPA on Pickleball Den to register.

Tennis: Because of the cold weather, play on the Har-Tru tennis courts is uncertain and scheduling may vary. Please call ahead to check court conditions before planning any soft court play. There are also two lighted hard tennis courts available, so bundle up any time and join us!

Whatever your racquet sport of choice may be, we are open year-round to meet your needs. Visit oceanpines.org for more information on tennis, pickleball, platform tennis, and more at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center.

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Pink Ribbon Classic raises more than \$20,000 for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Well over 100 players, 15 sponsors, and dozens of donors and volunteers helped to make the sixth annual Pickleball Pink Ribbon Classic a runaway success.

The event, held at the Ocean Pines Racquet Center on Friday, Oct. 13 and hosted by the Ocean Pines Pickleball Club and the American Cancer Society, raised more than \$20,000 for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer campaign.

“The Pink Ribbon pickleball tournament gives us a chance to raise awareness and raise money for the American Cancer Society, so we can continue the fight against breast cancer,” Event Director Becky Ferguson said. “As a breast cancer survivor since 2019, I recognize the utmost importance of this and I’m happy to help in any way I can.”

Along with the impressive fundraising haul, players earned 54 gold, silver and bronze medals, and participants and guests came away with door prizes and raffle items donated by local businesses and community members.

Throughout the day, the Racquet Center was overflowing with players and spectators.

“We have 128 participants this year, and I think that was a tribute to the people who have worked on this tournament for the past six years,” Ferguson said. “Their efforts have created a fun day full of surprises, and I think the participants really appreciate that.”

Racquet Sports Director Tim Johnson said he was humbled by the strong turnout and show of community support.

“The overwhelming success of this event is a testament to the nature of our pickleball community – kind, caring, always willing to support a good cause,” he said. “The countless hours given by the organizers and volunteers, the generous support of our sponsors, and the joyful participation of the players all

combined to make this the most special event on our Racquet Center calendar.

“I am happy that we were able to play a part in the fight against breast cancer! Kudos to Becky, Claire, and the other organizers on the fabulous success of this fundraising effort,” Johnson added.

Tournament organizers wish to thank Ferguson, along with Tournament Director Claire Walker and assistant Patty Felix, Registration Coordinator Julie Woulfe, and Outgoing Event Director Chris Shook.

Thanks also to: Volunteer Pickleball Club members and friends: Chris Shook, Eileen Carl, Alexa Giles, Sue Breazeale, Deb Downing, Dawn Ament, Debi Davidson, Bridget Carver, Ed Waugh, Lynn Waugh, Liz Madjeski, Ray Madjeski, Jim Ulman, Terri Ulman, Joan Ford, Sharon Hoffman, Donna Frankowski, Robin Chiddo, Kelly Briers, Barb Freimuth, Faye Jeffries, Jackie Kurtz, Joyce Goodson, Geoff Goodson, Rita Preller, Mike Mullen, Dan Coyne, Kelly Coyne, Jim Ferguson and Robin Durst.

Volunteer American Cancer Society and Pink Ribbon Ladies: Mary Bellis, Jean Keagle, Pammie Sue Dutton, Chris Butler, Judy Schoellkopf.

Volunteers from the local Verizon store, who came together in the spirit of community partnership and contributed to global awareness.

Racquet Sports Director Tim Johnson said stay tuned for a “mega-event” next October that will include Pink Ribbon events for pickleball, tennis and platform tennis.

For more information on Ocean Pines Racquet Sports, visit oceanpines.org.



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Bob Beckelman
Director of Golf

Winter golf still in play

Even as the temperatures drop in January and February, the Ocean Pines Golf Club remains open for golf enthusiasts looking for year-round play. In fact, off-season golf can offer prime conditions for a fun and rewarding golfing experience. Many of our players enjoy bundling up to play in the winter to get some exercise and keep their game sharp.

Pro Shop is always stocked with great clubs for every play type – and what we don't have, we can custom order for you.

Speaking of which, the Ocean Pines Golf Club is also a haven for last-minute shoppers. The Pro Shop boasts an array of gifts for all play levels, and gift certificates are always available.

For those non-snowbirds who are staying in the Pines, the Club's practice areas, including the driving range, stay open all winter, inviting golfers to keep their game sharp even in the colder months.

So, don your winter attire, embrace the brisk weather, and let Ocean Pines Golf Club be your sanctuary for some great winter golf, plenty of opportunities for lessons and practice, and a stocked Pro Shop.

For those prepping for a southern golf trip, the club's instructional services and club fittings, sheltered from the elements, serve as ideal tune-up spots. Our instructors can help iron out any flaws in your swing, and our

12th annual Pink Lady Tournament raises \$5,674 for AGH Foundation

The 12th annual Pink Lady Tournament in recently raised \$5,674 for the Imaging Department and the Eunice Q. Sorin Women's Diagnostic Center at Atlantic General Hospital.

The tournament, held at the Ocean Pines Golf Club on Oct. 18, once again supported the AGH Foundation. Tournament proceeds will help pay for and provide mammograms and related care for local women who are unable to afford such services.

Over the past dozen years, the tournament helped to raise more than \$18,000.

"The Pink Lady Tournament stands as a beacon of support for the AGH Foundation, dedicated to making mammograms and related healthcare accessible to women in the local community who face financial barriers," Chanelle Lake, director of the John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, said.

This year, for the first time, the tournament was open to the public and featured a field of 67 players.

Each foursome was given a pink ball, and one player from each group had to play that ball from tee to hole. The other three players played a scramble. If the player lost the pink

ball, that team was out of the pink ball tournament but could continue as a four-person scramble.

Prizes were awarded for first, second and third-place scramble winners, and low pink ball winners.

Tournament organizers thanked the Ocean Pines Golf Club and Clubhouse Grille staff, along with Glen Riddle, River Run and Matt Ortt Companies for donating door prizes.

"We would also like to thank AGH for its continued support in our endeavor, and we hope to increase participation even more next year, all in the spirit of supporting women's health in the community," Janet Stoer, tournament co-chairperson, said.



OPMGA announces season and championship winners

Following the final Men's Day for 2023, the second half and overall winners were announced and presented with their Pro Shop credits.

For the second half of the year, Fritz Lahner was the champion, with Mark Dornes coming in second and Mike Mason third.

For the full year, Lahner took the top honors with Dornes coming in second; John Nowak was the third-place finisher for the full season. This is the first time in recent history the OPMGA has had a repeat champion.

At the same time, trophies and prize money for the Match Play Championship were awarded. Darin Stuiber defeated Marcel Vales on their

19th hole of play and were presented champion and runner-up awards. Mike Daley took third place, while Ron Chrisner and Frank Brown were tied for fourth place.





Justin Hartshorne
Golf Course Superintendent

How to avoid frost delays

With winter upon us, local golfers will find themselves facing the annual conundrum of frost delays.

These delays can vary greatly from one course to another and are largely left up to the whims of the always unpredictable Eastern Shore weather.

Helping to keep the course healthy will make it easier for the maintenance staff to keep the course in great shape, and keep it open longer for golfers.

Below are a few tips to help you stay on the course, and not get bitten by frostbite delays:

- **Location matters:** Frost delays are unpredictable, as frost can linger in colder microclimates long after it has thawed elsewhere. North-facing slopes, low-lying areas, and wind-sheltered spots are particularly susceptible to prolonged frost coverage. Call the Pro Shop for course condition updates before setting out to avoid any unwelcome surprises.
- **Avoid “crunchy” grass:** While golf course turf is typically resilient to the rigors of play, the formation of

ice crystals can leave grasses brittle and prone to damage. Walking or driving over frost-covered grass can rupture plant cells, leading to dead turf. Even when damage isn't immediately evident, it may take more than a month for the grass to fully recover.

- **Watch the greens:** While frost damage can affect any part of the course, closely mown turf, like putting greens, is at a heightened risk. The concentrated foot traffic on greens can cause significant damage when frost is present.
- **Little frost, big delays:** Even if there are no apparent signs of frost on the first tee, the “all clear” signal may not be given. If frost persists in areas that are unavoidable in early rounds, the course may remain closed. Even after the frost is gone, the maintenance staff will need time to prepare the course for play.

When in doubt, call the Ocean Pines Golf Club at 410-641-6057 or email bbeckelman@oceanpines.org to subscribe to daily course updates.

There is **FREE FIREWOOD AVAILABLE** at the back of the Golf Club parking lot. There should be a steady supply of wood available throughout the winter.

Golf banquet honors longtime golfer, continues Toys for Tots collection tradition

Ninety-four people turned up on Nov. 6 to help celebrate the Ocean Pines Golf Members Council's annual End of Season Banquet at the Clubhouse Bar and Grille.

Among other things, the Golf Members Council oversees the members' scholarship program and hosts annual events including the Ocean Pines / Taylor Bank Scramble, the Bavarian Hops Scramble, and several social functions for the Ocean Pines golf community.

Bob Long, who assisted event organizer Don McMullen, said collecting for Toys for Tots has been a regular part of the banquet for some time, with golf member Joe Pantone overseeing that operation for perhaps two decades.

“Bunk Machen, who worked as a starter at the Golf Club and on the maintenance staff for many years, partnered with Joe,” Long said. “I always enjoyed walking into the banquet and seeing the two of them in their red marine blazers.”

Machen passed away last year, but the Toys for Tots support has remained steadfast, with impressive collection totals each year. Pantone said more than 80 toys were collected on Monday night.

The end-of-season banquet also served to honor Nelson Fenwick. He and his wife, Natalie, are longtime Golf Club members and also belonged to the Men's and Ladies' Golf Associations (OPMGA and OPLGA).

“Nelson was the Men's Day Tournament chair for many

years,” Long said. “He began the Sand Dawg program, where members help by filling divots and doing minor maintenance on the course. Members sign up and work on their hole every week or two. They also come out in force and help out on course aeration days. Nelson is the one who got this program started and oversaw its operation for many years.”

Long said the couple are moving out of the area to be closer to family.

Other guests of the banquet included Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola, Police Chief Tim Robinson, Golf Director Bob Beckelman, and Director of Golf Maintenance Justin Hartshorn.

On Jan. 19, the council will host a pizza party for members and friends of the Golf Club. Next spring, the group will celebrate the beginning of a new golf season with an Opening Day Shamble on April 6 that's open to all Ocean Pines residents.

For more information on member-run golf groups in Ocean Pines, contact Bill Bavis (Ocean Pines Golf Members Council) at williambavis@comcast.net; Tammy Banachowski (OPLGA) at tj.bano@gmail.com; and John Ferinde (OPMGA) at johnferinde@aol.com.



Students have annual field trips to Veterans Memorial

Worcester Preparatory School fifth graders enjoyed their annual field trip to the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines on Thursday, Oct. 19.

The visit was part of annual efforts by the Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation that include annual field trips by all fifth-grade students in the county. The tour was the last one scheduled for the calendar year.

For more information on the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines and the Worcester

County Veterans Memorial Foundation, please visit www.wocovets.org.



Garden Club helps ‘Decorate the Pines’

Several dozen members of the Ocean Pines Garden Club held a “Decorating the Pines” event in the community center on Nov. 27.

Garden Club members created garland swags and wreaths to help decorate signs at the entrances to Ocean Pines neighborhoods. Members and other volunteers then hung the decorations as part of a communitywide effort this holiday season.

The Garden Club was formed in 1976 to help plant flowers, shrubs, and trees around community signs, buildings, and parks, and in the median along Ocean Parkway.

Today, the Garden Club regularly collaborates with Ocean Pines Public Works on beautification projects, and also helps to maintain Ocean Pines parks.

The Garden Club hosts an Arbor Day ceremony each year, and club gifts and donations have included the Civil War era anchor at the Yacht Club in 1995, the gazebo at Pintail Park in 1998, the two stone benches at the community center in 2009, and two plaques for the Gold Star Program of the Veterans Memorial Foundation in 2014.

The Ocean Pines Garden Club meets on the second Thursday of each month. Guests and new members are welcome. For more information, contact Ann Shockley at 410-688-1975 or Patti Lookner at 410-973-1243.

For more information or to join the Ocean Pines Garden Club, visit bit.ly/OceanPinesGardenClub or www.facebook.com/groups/oceanpinedgardenclub.



COMMUNITY STORIES

Volunteers send holiday cheer to troops overseas

Operation We Care, working with American Legion Post 166, recently rallied more than 50 volunteers to prepare 226 care packages for U.S. troops deployed overseas.

The event, held at the American Legion Post in Ocean City on Dec. 10, included several members of the Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors and the Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation.

Memorial Foundation President and event chairperson Marie Gilmore said care packages were filled with personal hygiene essentials, snacks, food items, and messages from home for the holidays.

“The turnout was overwhelming and included members of our own Ocean Pines Board of Directors, John Latham and Jeff Heavner,” Gilmore said. “I was very happy to have the support of our OPA Board members and I look forward to continuing this relationship between Ocean Pines and Post 166. It was a truly heartening show of support for our troops!”



Gilmore said Veterans Memorial Foundation Board members Sharyn O’Hare, Ken Ingram and Kyle Hastings also helped pack boxes.

“Thank you to all who joined us,” Gilmore said. “Your support ensures that our deployed troops know they are remembered, appreciated and loved – especially during this holiday season.”

For more information on the American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, visit www.alpost166.org.

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2024 Market Calendar of Events

Feb. 10: Sweetheart Market

Come spend the morning at the Ocean Pines marketplace, participate in market activities, enjoy the music, and shop for the ingredients for a special Valentine's dinner.

March 2: In-season hours return – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

March 16: Celebrating the Green (St. Patrick's Day)

We're all just a little Irish on this day as we welcome the return of spring to our Ocean Pines marketplace. Look for the return of many seasonal market merchants.

March 30: Easter Magic Market

What would Easter be without plenty of decadent baked goods, early spring produce, and blooming spring flowers? This marketplace Easter celebration will have loads of fun, while you experience the magic that this special spring market occasion brings.

May 11: Blooms and Bouquets

It's Mother's Day weekend and we're celebrating with a home and garden market day! The marketplace will be filled with flowers, hanging baskets, garden starter plants, and décor for the home and garden.

May 25: Memorial Day Weekend Market

The Ocean Pines marketplace is the perfect place to pick up everything you need to cook a fantastic Memorial Day cookout. In addition to fresh local produce, you can pick up meats, eggs, desserts, baked goods, and more.

June 1: Strawberry Market

A spring tradition at the Ocean Pines marketplace! Those who attend this event will be treated to a fun-filled market day featuring entertainment and plenty of the market shopping that we all love.

July 4 (Wed, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.): Independence Day Celebration

Our Independence Day market is truly a feast for the senses. You'll find an abundance of fresh, local produce, jams, eggs, local honey and plenty of baked goods will be on hand for this holiday market.

Aug. 31: Labor Day Weekend Market

The marketplace is the perfect place to pick up everything you need to cook a fantastic Labor Day cookout. In addition to fresh local produce, you can pick up meats, poultry, eggs, desserts, baked goods, and more.

Sept. 21: Apple Harvest Jamboree

Celebrate our diverse and unique fall offerings! Kick off fall and have old-fashioned family country fun at the market.

Oct. 5: Offseason hours 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Oct. 19: Pumpkin Festival

Come celebrate fall, y'all! Enjoy an unforgettable experience of choosing the perfect pumpkin and get lost in our artisan village. Don't forget the freshly pressed apple cider!

Nov. 23: Thanksgiving Harvest Market

Our merchants come together to offer all the best fixings for your Thanksgiving table and home. The festival features delicious foods, face painting, demonstrations, live music, and more! Come gather the Delmarva bounty and bring Thanksgiving to your home from the Ocean Pines marketplace. There's so much to do at the Thanksgiving Harvest Festival, you just have to come see for yourself.

Nov. 26 (Tue, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.): Turkey Tuesday Market

It's time to gather your special orders and grab those last-minute items for a bountiful holiday. Don't forget to shop our artisans for the perfect hostess gift and more.

Nov. 30: Small Business Saturday

Visit and shop the many unique marketplace shops, boutiques and galleries for one-of-a-kind gifts from merchants that are truly glad you came by!

Dec. 21: Christmas Market

Our market merchants offer a unique and unforgettable experience that captures the spirit of the holiday season. Browse a selection of handmade crafts, artisanal goods, and delicious treats, all while being surrounded by the sounds of holiday music, and exquisite gift ideas.



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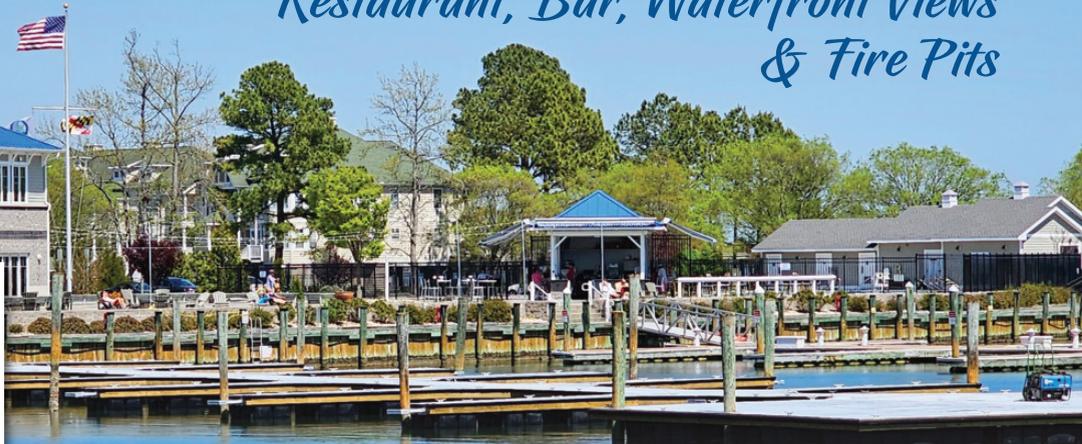
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Photo by George Ball

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Sat, March 23

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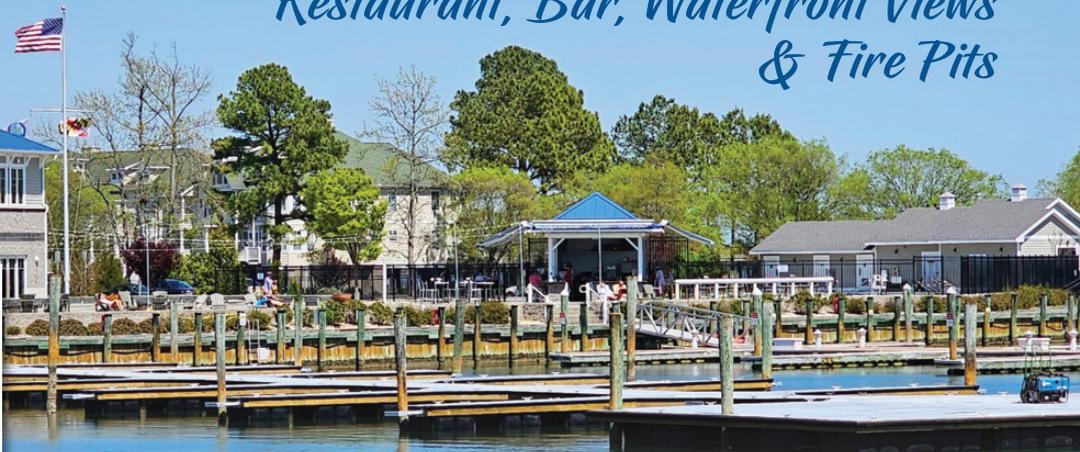
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Photo by George Ball

OCEAN PINES, MARYLAND

*Restaurant, Bar, Waterfront Views
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