



OCEAN PINES REPORT

COMPLIMENTARY

Your Connection to the Ocean Pines, Maryland Community

Vol. 56, No. 4 | Fall 2024



Board of Directors election results official

Board certifies 2024 OPA election after high voter turnout
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Peletier given Sam Wilkinson Award

A tireless volunteer who spent the last two decades helping others
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Women's Club of Ocean Pines' golden anniversary

Charitable club celebrates 50 years of promoting social & civic activities
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Meet the team: Michelle Hitchens

Longtime aquatics teacher & lifeguard has successful first summer as director
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Voting results official, as Board certifies 2024 OPA election

Ocean Pines Board members on Aug. 12 affirmed the results of the 2024 Board of Directors election.

Elections Committee Chairperson Steve Ransdell said the results of the voting were as follows: **Rick Farr: 1,933, Jeff Heavner: 1,868, Amy Peck: 1,270, Sherri Clifford: 936, and Jerry Murphy: 293.**

The top-two vote getters, Farr and Heavner, each earned a three-year term on the OPA Board. Both were incumbents.

Ransdell said there were 19 blank ballots, and 13 that were ruled invalid.

During the annual meeting on Aug. 10, Association Secretary and Elections Committee liaison John Latham thanked committee members for their hard work.

"I wanted to make sure that we congratulate Chairman Steve Ransdell [and committee members] Cheryl Jacobs, Fred Robinson, Patrick Lehner, and Ken Petrini," he said.

Latham also thanked outgoing committee members, including former Chairperson Tom Piatti, and members George Alston, Tom Schwartz, and Nanci Osborne.

"They handed off a playbook that truly contributed to our success," he said.

Latham thanked General Manager John Viola, Director of Business Administration Linda Martin, Director of Public Relations and Marketing Josh Davis, Marketing Coordinator Nancy MacCubbin, IT Manager Keith Calabrese, IT Support Associate Howard Webb, Administrative Assistant Michelle Lane-Ross, and Assessments and Memberships Manager Ruth Ann Meyer.

"I just want everyone to know that this thing doesn't happen

in the backroom," Latham said. "There's a lot of moving parts, and we feel it was a very successful election."

Latham said committee members would meet over the next few weeks to discuss the election and make recommendations for the following year.

"The goal, each year, is to try to make it a little bit better," he said.

Ransdell also spoke on Aug. 10, thanking Ocean Pines voters. "I wanted to thank the membership for the great voter turnout," he said. "The number of ballots cast ... in the last five years, it was the highest that we've had."

He added that 27.7% of votes were cast online. "Clearly, a large portion and a growing portion of our membership likes the online voting option," he said. "A large number of folks are being served and online voting does save the Association money" because it saves on paper and postage.

Ransdell said the election was something of a challenge, because he was the only committee member with prior experience. He thanked the four new members for stepping up.

"It was a great, great help," he said. Ransdell joked that he and Latham "are on speed dial now" after a busy election cycle.

"I only have to press one button to get his phone, and it's almost always answered right away ... that's essential to getting answers to some questions," he said.

He also thanked Association staff for their help. "I don't think most people really understand the customer service that we, as members, get from the staff," he said. "I want to add my thanks to all of them."

OPA Board selects officers: Lakernick to serve as president, Farr as vice president

Dr. Stuart Lakernick will serve as Ocean Pines Association President after a unanimous vote during an organization meeting, Friday, Aug. 23 at the Administration Board Room.

Also decided during the meeting, Rick Farr - the prior president - will serve as Association Vice President, John Latham will be secretary, and Monica Rakowski will be the treasurer. Each was a unanimous selection.

Other Board appointments included Linda Martin as

assistant secretary, Steve Phillips as assistant treasurer, UHY as the auditing firm, Bruce Bright (Ayres, Jenkins, Gordy & Almand) as legal counsel, and Doug Parks as parliamentarian.

Directors also set the regular Board meeting schedule for the next year: **Sept. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 23, Dec. 21, Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 29, April 26, May 24, June 28, July 26, and Annual Meeting - Aug. 9.**

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Women's Club of Ocean Pines celebrates 50th anniversary



Since 1974, the Women's Club of Ocean Pines has raised tens of thousands of dollars for area scholarships and offered countless local women an outlet both to socialize and give back to the community.

Now in its 50th year, the Women's Club boasts a roster of more than 100 members.

The club began to develop in 1972, when a group of women met to play cards, sew and talk about their new community. Originally known as the "Year Rounders Club," the group raised \$500 for the Ocean Pines Association from two bazaars they organized, with that money going toward a living community Christmas tree and card tables for the new community center. At the time, the primary purpose of the club was to acquaint new residents with the community and to promote social and civic activities.

The Women's Club of Ocean Pines was officially established in 1974.

In 1975, the club bought an "electro-printer" to aid in the publishing of the first Ocean Pines Homeowners Directory. The directory sold for \$1 and included listings for 106 full-time homeowner residents and 66 long-term renters. Club dues were \$3 per year.

By 1981, total Women's Club charitable donations topped \$2,000. Just seven years later, in 1988, the club donated \$19,000 from its Memorial Fund toward construction of the White Horse Park pavilion, marking the single-largest donation for that project.

The Women's Club continued to thrive and provide scholarships and community donations during the 2020 COVID pandemic. Meetings were held via ZOOM and fundraising was a particular challenge. During this time the club originated the "Cash for Winners" raffle, which continues to be an annual fundraising event. This year's raffle will have a 50th Anniversary theme.

Today, the Women's Club focuses on scholarships for high school seniors living in Ocean Pines. To help fund those scholarships, the club hosts game nights, fashion shows, bake sales, garage sales, and other social events.

Scholarships are awarded each June



to local high school seniors based on academic achievement, extracurricular involvement, and dedication to the community.

Scholarship amounts vary, depending on the fundraising success each year. The Women's Club has provided as much as \$7,500 for scholarships in a single year

One student recipient who received a \$1,000 scholarship in 2002 has "given back" more than \$4,000 to the Women's Club scholarship program since 2016. He currently owns a business in Salisbury, where he lives with his wife and two daughters.

Since 2007, the club has awarded \$69,650 in scholarships to 58 high school seniors. During the same period, the Women's Club donated \$35,315 to more than a dozen local groups, from Ocean Pines' Recreation and Parks, Police and Fire departments, to Star Charities, Women Supporting Women, Coastal Hospice, and Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services. The Women's Club has also supported initiatives like the Ocean Pines Skateboard Park and the Worcester County Veterans Memorial.

There is only one stipulation to become a recipient of a Women's Club donation: the money must benefit Ocean Pines residents.

Today, the Women's Club continues to be a way for neighbors to meet while supporting their local community. The group is always looking for new members, as well as donors.

Members meet on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August. Regular meetings host a guest speaker or occasionally the making of a craft item. Annual membership dues are \$10.

For more info about the Women's Club of Ocean Pines, contact Theresa Solyak at 717-471-0703 or tsolyak@gmail.com.



Voices from the Women's Club

"One of the first things I did when I moved to Ocean Pines from Rockville was to join the Women's Club of Ocean Pines. What better way is there to make new friends and give back to the Community? Since 2006, I have been first and second vice president, president once, and co-president once and now serve as parliamentarian." — Susann Palamara

"Shortly after moving to Ocean Pines full time in 2009, I joined the Women's Club of Ocean Pines. It was a way for me to meet new women and become involved in its giving program. I have served on several committees, which enabled me to work closely

with like-minded women. I also served as co-president, from 2016-2018, and, most recently, as recording secretary.

"As an educator, my priority has always been helping students. In 2018, I became chair of the scholarship committee. With the help of a committee member, a rubric was designed to give fair and impartial judging of each applicant. Each year we are impressed by the amazing talent and skills of these Ocean Pines seniors. It is always with great pride that the Women's Club of Ocean Pines awards scholarships to deserving applicants during our Spring Awards Ceremony." — Donna Potenza



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Farr highlights FY24 Board accomplishments

Then Ocean Pines Association President Rick Farr, on Aug. 10, highlighted Board of Director accomplishments over the last fiscal year and thanked the many staff and volunteers who helped make those possible.

Among the biggest achievements, he said, was lowering assessments while continuing to support and improve Association amenities.

“That’s a collective effort with the Board, as well as the GM and his staff to make sure we’re making the right decisions in the best interest of all membership,” he said.

Speaking of the GM, Farr said the Board met one of its top priorities when it signed John Viola to a four-year contract extension.

The Board also approved a new memorandum of understanding with the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.

“That is historic,” Farr said. “The Board worked well with the leadership of the Volunteer Fire Department to make this MOU come to realization and [become] the next step in furnishing a new firehouse that’s going to protect the community.”

The Board further supported public safety by increasing police salaries and approving the purchase of two new police cars.

In aiding amenities, Farr said the Board approved the first phase of a multiyear plan to replace the aging irrigation system at the Golf Course.

“We’re a destination Golf Course and it continues to be improved,” Farr said.

Farr said an expanded Yacht Club tiki bar will help enhance the customer experience and boost revenue.

He said the Board also approved Racquet Sports building renovations and funding for new clay courts, along with hiring new directors for Racquet Sports and Aquatics.

The Board approved a refresh of the Beach Club interior, the first electronic sign in the community, and a new kayak launch at Pintail Park. Other park improvements included increased handicapped accessibility at playgrounds, and additions to the dog park.

Board backed beautification efforts focused throughout Ocean Pines, but especially at the iconic North Gate, Farr said. He credited Viola for the eye-catching field of sunflowers currently in bloom.

The Board oversaw more aggressive collection of past assessments, bringing back \$140,000 at no cost to Association members. Investments in drainage continued, as did annual road resurfacing.

Farr said the Board approved changes to several government documents, including those on advisory committee policy, and the Budget and Finance and Elections committees.

Farr thanked prior Association President and current Parliamentarian Doug Parks, current Board members, Assistant Secretary Linda Martin, and all the administrative staff.

He also recognized committee members for working through their respective liaisons to recommend new ideas and bring up important issues to the Board and Ocean Pines operations.

“I really do appreciate the time and effort for your volunteerism. It’s very important for the Association,” he said.



OPA, OPVFD give update on South Fire Station

During the Annual Meeting, Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola highlighted construction of a new South Fire Station among the top upcoming initiatives.

The Ocean Pines Board in July approved a new memorandum of understanding with the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, including provisions for fire protection and EMS services, funding of the Fire Department by OPA, and construction of a new South Fire Station.

Viola said he recently met with OPVFD President Joe Enste to discuss the project.

"We've had many meetings, [and] I believe we're on track," Viola said. "I've seen a lot of positive work. It's been a very constructive time."

Enste said there have been several productive meetings recently, both with Ocean Pines, and with OPVFD leadership and membership.

"We are making a lot of great progress," he said. "We're going through the initial phases of getting everything

sketched out [and] making sure that we have all the needs covered in the drawings."

Enste said OPVFD officials are making a list of their needs for the building, so those can be incorporated in the design, and so members of the community can eventually see those designs.

"It's been a pleasure working with OPA, going through this whole entire process," he said. "There's ups and downs with anything and we're learning how to work together, so it's really a great learning experience for myself and Chief [Joey] Widgeon, as well as the rest of the fire department."

Enste thanked Viola, as well as then Association President Rick Farr, the Ocean Pines Board, and the support team.

Widgeon also thanked OPA staff and Board members.

"Everything is going good," he said. "I do appreciate everything going smoothly, and hopefully we'll have a new firehouse within a couple of years."



BJ's Wholesale Club membership offer returns to Ocean Pines

BJ's Wholesale Club is once again partnering with the Ocean Pines Association to bring a special membership offer, effective Oct. 1-31, to benefit the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines Foundation.

With this offer, NEW members receive a 12-month BJ's Club Card Membership for \$20 or a BJ's Club+ Card Membership, which earns 2% cash back on most BJ's purchases, instant .05 cent discount at BJS Gas, and rewards that never expire, for \$60 with BJ's Easy Renewal.

Existing Club Card members can purchase a 12-month renewal for \$50. Existing Club+ Card members can purchase a 12-month renewal for \$100, with BJ's Easy Renewal.

In addition to offering special membership discounts, BJ's will donate \$10 for each completed NEW BJ's Inner Circle application, or \$5 for each completed BJ's existing membership application received, to the Worcester County Veterans Memorial at Ocean Pines Foundation.

To take advantage of this special offer by phone, call 800-313-

8887 and use promo code 100407 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

BJ's membership applications are also available at the Ocean Pines Association Administration Building at 239 Ocean Parkway and online at oceanpines.org. Applications must be returned with payment by Oct. 31. Check and credit card payments will be accepted.

Applications may be dropped off at the administration building front desk or mailed to Ocean Pines Association, Attn: Marketing, 239 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

To download an application, visit oceanpines.org and click on the "News" section. This offer is not available online, at any BJ's location, or for any current Easy Renewal members.

This special promotion is only offered through Ocean Pines two times a year. The next promotion will be in April 2025.

Current BJ's members whose memberships will expire before then are encouraged to renew during the fall offer. Members can check their current expiration dates by checking their BJ's receipts or the BJ's app, or by calling 800-313-8887.

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Legal report: no litigation and \$144,000 in collections

Included in the Ocean Pines Annual Meeting reports on Aug. 10 were an overview of legal services by law firm Ayres Jenkins Gordy & Almand, and the yearly audit report from UHY LLP.

Attorney Bruce Bright of Ayres Jenkins Gordy & Almand spoke on the firm's history and current duties with Ocean Pines, while Chris Hall summarized the annual audit process.

Bright said the firm was founded in 1973 and includes eight partners, three associates and 11 full-time support staff.

The firm has represented the Town of Ocean City since 1983, and currently represents the Town of Snow Hill and Worcester County Board of Education, along with several other homeowners' associations.

"We're very proud and pleased to have been given the opportunity to represent Ocean Pines," Bright said.

He said the firm was appointed to serve Ocean Pines in May 2023. Bright serves as general counsel with assistance from Maureen Howarth, the former attorney for both Worcester and Wicomico counties, along with other partners, associates and staff as needed.

The firm provides general legal advice to the Board, general manager and the various departments of the Association, and engages with contract negotiations, litigation and delinquent assessments and other violations. Bright noted the Association had previously contracted with a second firm for both collections, and Compliance, Permit and Inspections (CPI) violations.

"We handle employment issues, compliance and regulatory issues, and really all other legal matters and needs that arise for OPA," he said. "We're trying to be a one-stop shop for all the legal needs of Ocean Pines, rather than Ocean Pines having to use more than one firm, as it has in the past."

Over the past year, he said the firm helped revise the CPI process by "making it clearer, more linear and easier to

understand." He said the process also now complies with new state laws.

Bright said there were also improvements to the process of collecting unpaid assessments.

"The collections are getting to our office a bit earlier than in the past," he said, adding the firm has taken some of the administrative burden from Association staff.

Between Aug. 1, 2023, and July 15, 2024, Bright said collections have totaled more than \$144,000.

"This service that we provide is at no cost to OPA, because when we collect the unpaid assessment, we also collect the attorney fee that goes along with that," he said.

Bright said the firm assisted with the new memorandum of understanding between Ocean Pines Association and the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department, which he called "a very important step toward the future." The firm also aided in the contract extension for General Manager John Viola, along with several recent revisions to Ocean Pines governing documents.

"I'm happy to report that, in the year that we've been general counsel, there's been no litigation against the OPA," Bright said, adding, "We've been able to reduce overall legal fees for the OPA for the fiscal year 2023-2024, as compared to prior years."

Also during the meeting, Hall supplied the annual auditor's report.

As the auditor, Hall said UHY audits and renders an opinion on the Association's financial statements each year.

Hall echoed Bright's sentiments and said UHY attempts to be "a one-stop shop," offering a variety of auditing and accounting services.

He said the auditing process starts each April, with internal control documentation and risk assessments, and continues through the spring and early summer with inventory counts, balance sheet and income statement testing of accounts and transactions, and other fieldwork.

The process generally wraps up in July with a review of the final fiscal-year financial statements.

Once again, Hall said Ocean Pines earned a "clean" and unmodified opinion.

"That's the highest level of assurance that any accounting firm can on a set of financial statements," he said.

Community survey goes live

Members of the Ocean Pines Strategic Planning Advisory Committee released a new survey designed to gather community input on top priorities for the next several years.

The goal for the survey is to capture a broad range of demographic and interest groups. The survey has 17 questions and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Committee Chairperson Rob Keesling said individual survey responses will be strictly confidential, and the overall results will be made public by the committee and shared on the Ocean Pines website. The deadline to complete the survey is Oct. 20.

To take the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024OPAsurvey.



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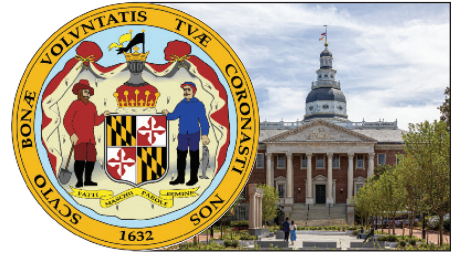


Guest column:

Protecting our Shore way of life

By Mary Beth Carozza

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



Those of us living here on Maryland’s Eastern Shore are blessed and fortunate with daily opportunities to take in a breath-taking sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean, to go fishing, crabbing or boating in our Coastal Bays, or to just walk along the trails in Ocean Pines, Assateague or other local parks. Along with the enjoyment of these natural assets comes the responsibility of protecting our Shore way of life today and for future generations.

Opposing offshore wind energy industrialization

As the State Senator representing Maryland’s only ocean beach town and all of Worcester County, I consistently have been steadfast in my opposition to offshore wind energy industrialization of the Atlantic Ocean off Maryland’ Coast, going back to 2017.

Since the beginning of these discussions of developing offshore wind energy projects off Ocean City, I have conducted my own research and listened to the deep concerns of my constituents about both the immediate and long-term negative impacts of these projects over time.

The facts of the proposed offshore wind energy projects are alarming. US Wind has applied to build 114 wind turbines in the ocean as close as 10.7 miles from Ocean City. The turbines will be clearly visible from our beach, and the government’s own environmental impact study acknowledges possible harm to marine life, a negative impact on commercial fishing, and disruptions to navigation. In addition, US Wind has applied for a permit to build a 10,000 square-foot concrete pier in the West Ocean City Harbor, which would devastate the local commercial fishing industry and forever change the iconic nature of the local harbor.

To add insult to injury, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has moved forward with plans for a proposed second lease area for the construction of offshore wind turbines as close as 3.5 miles from the Ocean City shoreline. There is a 60-day public comment period from Aug. 22-Oct. 21, 2024, and individuals may comment by navigating to Regulations.gov and searching for BOEM-2024-0040.

As I have done since 2017, I will take every public opportunity to be on the record in strong opposition to the proposed wind energy industrialization projects, and I encourage you to do the same and make your voice heard. See SaveOceanCity.org for more information!



Advocating for our Maryland Coastal Bays

One way to support the Maryland Coastal Bays is to purchase Maryland’s new “Bays” license plate to include the Coastal Bays. The new plate reads: Protect the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays. It was unveiled in July at Assateague State Park’s Living Shoreline with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

We’re already seeing more Marylanders purchase the new “Bays” tag with the additional funds from these sales targeted to the Maryland Coastal Bays Program. We also expect to see more Marylanders and beyond support, explore, protect and enjoy Maryland’s stunning coastal bays which include Sinepuxent, Isle of Wight, Chincoteague, Assawoman, and Newport.

Supporting parental rights – voting no on Question 1

Along with valuing our natural resources on the Shore, we also value our Shore families, including the rights of parents. That is why I am voting against Question 1, the “Reproductive Freedom” amendment, on the Maryland ballot.

I am voting against Question 1 as I believe parents must retain the right to make medical decisions for their minor children, especially high-risk procedures like late-term abortions or gender transition surgeries. Minor children simply do not have the same mental capacity as an adult to make an informed consent decision.

The so-called “Reproductive Freedom” amendment does not contain minimum age or parental consent requirements which protect minor children from predatory and experimental medical practices.

You can be pro-choice and vote against Question 1 in support of parental rights. I encourage voters to go to HealthNotHarmMD.org for more information.

Ocean Pines neighborhood news

It’s been enjoyable spending time the past few months with my parents in The Parke. One real highlight that I did not anticipate is the convenience of playing tennis at the Ocean Pines Racquet Club and meeting new friends through the variety of racquet activities offered at the facility. As a member who finally used the courts this year, I have been impressed with the professionalism, upkeep, and camaraderie experienced at the club, and am grateful to have had this time with new friends and neighbors. I am grateful and blessed to represent the people of Ocean Pines and all of Worcester County.



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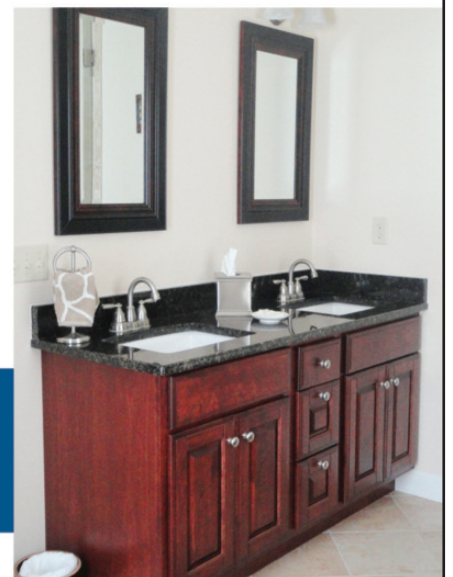
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Guest column: County updates

By **Chip Bertino**

Worcester County Commissioner President



The autumn chill is returning, and the leaves will soon turn to the golden hues of the season. It's an enjoyable time of year, especially in Ocean Pines. Here are some updates from county government.

Cell phone connectivity is a concern for many of us. The issue has been discussed through the years. During that time, I've worked with varying OPA board members, OPA administration and providers to find a path forward. To that end, in early August I hosted a meeting with Ocean Pines Police Chief Tim Robinson, General Manager John Viola, Director of Business Administration Linda Martin, Commissioner Jim Bunting, Chief Administrative Officer Weston Young, Sheriff Matt Crisafulli, Emergency Services Director Matt Owens, Public Works Director Dallas Baker, Development Review and Permitting Director Jennifer Keener and others to review opportunities for county government to assist in this effort. It was a productive meeting in which we explored options and potential tower locations.

The county offered multiple locations for a provider to install equipment to enhance coverage including the water towers within Ocean Pines. A location behind the administration building was discussed as a possible site and 5G technology was talked about as well. Following the meeting, county staff members provided cellular provider contact information to OPA staff. The county is committed to working with OPA to bring a remedy to this ongoing issue.

There has been talk within the community that the Ocean Pines Water and Wastewater plant would be an ideal location for a cellular tower. The location is not feasible nor available for such use. There is only so much usable, undeveloped land at the site. The county must ensure that future requirements such expansion of the plant for new technology, maintenance and/or to meet evolving regulatory/environmental mandates can be met now and in the future. Construction of a tower at the site would complicate and limit flexibility in meeting future needs.

County government has taken a firm stand in opposing wind turbine construction off Ocean City's coast. During the past several years, the Commissioners have sent multiple letters to multiple agencies articulating concerns about the negative impact the wind turbine project will have on Worcester County's fishing and tourism

industries, especially the cataclysmic effect on the West Ocean City harbor, the only commercial harbor in the Mid-Atlantic region with ocean access. The harbor was specifically established as a commercial marine zoning district in 1999. It needs to be protected.

The impact of these foreign-owned, monstrous offshore structures should prick the conscience of all of us who value the environment. Testing procedures associated with construction are wreaking havoc on fragile aquatic life. Dead whales on the beach. Disoriented dolphins washing ashore. The threat to horseshoe crabs, which are critical to cancer and other medical research, is said to be unknown.

The Commissioners unanimously voted to support the Town of Ocean City should it decide to move ahead with legal action against the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Additionally, we sent a letter to the Sussex County (Delaware) Council urging them to deny an application by Renewable Development LLC, a subsidiary of US Wind, for a conditional approval ordinance to build an electric substation near the Indian River Power Plant.

County government hopes that opportunities can be found, through cooperative discussions with the state, that will ultimately create a path forward that respects Worcester County's way of life, its environment and its commerce.

Fitch Ratings, one of three major credit rating agencies, has upgraded Worcester County's Issuer Default Rating (IDR) and general obligation (GO) bonds to AAA.

In its rating commentary, Fitch recognized the county's financial resilience, for both revenues and expenditures, as well as the planned build-up of reserves in recent years as key ratings drivers for the upgrade. In addition, the county's ability to manage long term debt and related liabilities was cited as being well above comparable counties and Fitch concluded that the county's credit outlook is "Stable."

Because of the conservative management of taxpayer money and county assets, this elevated rating improves the county's ability to, when necessary, borrow money at a reduced cost.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 443-783-3248 or by email at cbertino@co.worcester.md.us.

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Fall into healthy habits with Worcester Health

Guest column by the Worcester County Health Department

Balance your life with Healthy Lifestyle Balance Program

Take control of your health this fall with Worcester Health's *Healthy Lifestyle Balance* program. This program is proven to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, and other chronic diseases. *Healthy Lifestyle Balance* is a no-cost class that will help you eat healthy, lose weight, set goals, manage stress, and learn techniques to live a healthier and happier life.

The *Healthy Lifestyle Balance* program is a 26-session, year-long group program, beginning next month. A full class schedule will be provided at the first class session. Classes will be held at the following locations and times:

- Mondays, 5-6 p.m., (Oct. 7, 2024 – Oct. 6, 2025) at Free Indeed Ministries, 418 West Market St., Snow Hill
- Thursdays, 9-10 a.m., (Oct. 10, 2024 – Sept. 25, 2025) at Sunrise Church, 10026 Main St., Berlin
- Thursdays, 5-6 p.m., (Oct. 10, 2024 – Sept. 25, 2025) at Living Waters Inspirational Church of God, 2226 Bypass Rd., Pocomoke City

To register, visit <https://forms.gle/UcxzaJNdrVjjLkHq8> or call 410-632-1100 ext.1108.

Funded by the Maryland Department of Health Tobacco, Diabetes, and Chronic Disease Program, this activity is part of the Rural Equity and Access to Community Health (REACH) program and is funded by TidalHealth through a grant from the Maryland General Assembly as part of the Maryland Health Equity Resource Act. Grant funding is administered by the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission. For more information, please visit: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Pages/herc.aspx>. The views presented here are those of the grantee organization and not necessarily those of the Commission, its Commissioners, or its staff.

Step into fun with 2024-2025 Just Walk event schedule

Are you ready to get active and explore the parks in Worcester County? Join the Worcester County Health Department for nine *Just Walk Fun Walks* in 2024-2025. The newest series of free walking events kicks off in October and runs through the summer of 2025.

To make things even more exciting, *Just Walk Worcester* is introducing a *Just Walk* passport program for the 2024-2025 event season! *Just Walk* passports are available at the Snow Hill Health Department, Berlin Health Center, and the Pocomoke Health Center. Once you grab your passport, take it with you to each event and get it stamped by staff at the event.

Participation in self-guided/scavenger hunt events will be documented through your event registration. At the final *Just Walk* event in June, provide the health department with your stamped/signed passport. Residents who complete all nine walks will receive a prize and be entered into a raffle to win a grand prize.

Join *Just Walk Worcester*, a free, self-directed and reported physical activity program that rewards participants for miles or minutes of activity they complete. To join or for more information, visit JustWalkWorcester.org or call 410-632-1100 ext. 1108.

JUST WALK FUN WALKS

NEW Just Walk Passports! Grab your Just Walk Passport by the first walk event from the Snow Hill, Berlin, or Pocomoke Health Departments! Passports will be stamped at each walk event. Residents who fill their passports will receive a free prize at the last walk and be entered into a raffle drawing!

2024-2025 SCHEDULE

October 1 st -31 st	Just Walktober Challenge Self-guided • 31 day walk challenge	
October 4 th -6 th	Just Walk Community-Wide Scavenger Hunt Self-guided • Participating parks in Snow Hill, Pocomoke, Berlin, Ocean Pines, and Ocean City	
November 2 nd	Fungi Festival-5K Walk Run Pocomoke State River Park-Shad Landing Check-in at 9:30am; walk starts at 10:00am	
November 8 th	Berlin Fall Glow Walk Stephen Decatur Park - Check-in at 5:00pm; walk starts at 5:30pm	
December 2 nd -13 th	12 Days of Just Walk Self-guided • Newtown Park, Byrd Park, Herring Creek Nature Park- 8:00am-5:00pm	

January 1 st	First Day Walk & Hike Scavenger Hunt Self-guided • Assateague State Park-Rackliffe Trail- 8am-5pm	
February 15 th -16 th	Go Red Scavenger Hunt Self-guided • Cypress Park, Byrd Park, Stephen Decatur Park- 8am-5pm	
April 5 th	Tortoise & Hare Dare Pocomoke River State Park - Shad Landing Check-in at 8:30am; walk starts at 9am	
June 7 th	Just Walk For Men's Health Cypress Park - Check-in at 8:30am; walk starts at 9am	
FOR MORE INFORMATION: WORCESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT 410-632-1100 Ext. 1108 WorcesterHealth.org		

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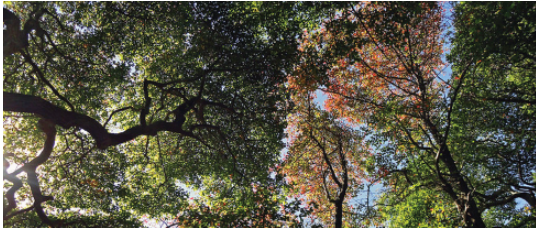
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Embracing native trees

REET STREET guest column by
the Environment & Natural Assets Committee

Fall is one of the best times of the year for planting trees in Maryland. If you plan to take advantage of the season to add shade and beauty to your landscape, consider adding trees native to our watershed.

Planting native trees and taking good care of them are key actions individual gardeners, and communities can take to limit the impacts of climate change and create beautiful, resilient yards and neighborhoods.

The benefits of trees in the landscape include:

- **Improved air quality:** Trees act as natural air filters, removing harmful particles and gasses from the air and releasing oxygen.
- **Curbing climate change:** Trees help to mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide during photosynthesis.
- **Conserving water:** Trees help conserve water by retaining moisture and improving water quality.
- **Preventing erosion:** Trees help prevent soil erosion through their structure, root systems, and foliage.
- **Creating wildlife habitats:** Trees provide food and shelter for many species of birds, insects, and other wildlife.
- **Reducing noise:** Trees can reduce noise pollution by as much as 40%.
- **Controlling temperature:** Shade trees help cool streets and cities.
- **Moderating floods:** Trees help prevent flooding by improving water drainage and stopping pollutants from entering water sources.

Ocean Pines property owners can take advantage of Maryland state programs that offer free saplings and discounts for trees purchased at participating retail outlets.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers free tree seedlings to landowners in Worcester County who have a creek, drainage ditch, stream or other waterway on or near their property through the Backyard Buffers program.

Contact Kate Daub (kdaub@berlinmd.gov) for more information.

Marylanders Plant Trees coupons worth \$25 off the purchase of one tree with a retail value of \$50 or more can be used at participating retail nurseries and garden centers. The discount is taken at the register at the time of the sale. One coupon must be filled in for each tree purchased. Bluebird Farms (410-208-4475) on Racetrack Road is the only retail outlet in Worcester County participating in the tree coupon program. There are also two participating nurseries in Wicomico County: How Sweet it Is in Eden (410-742-8600) and Nichols Tree Farm in Hebron (443-523-2217).

The Marylanders Plant Trees Recommended Tree List can be found on the state's Department of Natural Resources website (<https://t.ly/HSP4b>). The list identifies trees by size and includes the following popular species: **white oak, flowering dogwood, green hawthorn, eastern redbud, eastern red cedar, blackgum, bald cypress, eastern white pine, loblolly pine, Virginia pine, river birch, serviceberry, sweetbay magnolia, American elm and eastern hemlock.**



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Message from the OPA PRESIDENT



Dr. Stuart Lakernick
OPA President

Heartfelt gratitude

As we welcome the beautiful fall season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements of our community and express my heartfelt gratitude.

First and foremost, I'd like to extend a special thank you to our General Manager, John Viola, and his dedicated team. Their hard work, commitment, and exceptional efforts have made this past season a resounding success. From managing projects to organizing events, their contributions have truly made a difference in our community.

As the leaves change color and we settle into the fall season, it's also a wonderful time to think about how we can give back to our community. Volunteering is a fantastic way to get involved, meet your neighbors, and support the initiatives that keep our community thriving. Whether it's assisting with seasonal activities, participating in neighborhood clean-ups, or contributing to local programs, your involvement can have a meaningful impact.

If you're interested in volunteering or have ideas for new ways to enhance our community, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your participation helps make Ocean Pines a better place for all of us.

Thank you again to John Viola, his team, my colleagues on our Board of Directors, and all of you for your ongoing support and dedication. Here's to a wonderful fall and many more successes to come!



From Memorial Day to Labor Day, you've filled our venues with energy, music, and good vibes. We are grateful for your continued support and for making this summer one for the books. Thank you!

We look forward to seeing the photos you capture this autumn, winter, and holiday season! To send us photos, email info@oceanpines.org.

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.**



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

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



VICE PRESIDENT

Elected in 8/2024, 2nd term ends in 2027

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



TREASURER

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

Monica Rakowski
mrakowski@oceanpines.org
410-493-4202



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John Latham
jlatham@oceanpines.org
410-404-8907



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



DIRECTOR

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ebrady@oceanpines.org
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Jeff Heavner
jheavner@oceanpines.org
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OPA announces contract extension for GM Viola

The Ocean Pines Board of Directors in July unanimously approved a four-year contract extension for General Manager John Viola. The contract also includes an option for a fifth year.

Ocean Pines named Viola the temporary general manager in April 2019, and, in June 2019, he signed a six-month agreement that has been extended several times.

Viola has been an Ocean Pines homeowner for nearly 15 years and before that had vacationed in the community.

A New York native, he is a certified public accountant, with an MBA with a specialization in management and tax management from Pace University in New York and an undergraduate degree in accounting from Manhattan College. He worked in the private sector as a CPA, including 28 years with Avon, where he finished as the assistant global controller.

In Ocean Pines, Viola served as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee for four years, and served on a volunteer basis as the Association's treasurer and chief financial officer, prior to becoming general manager.

In six years as general manager, Viola has overseen six consecutive fiscal years with a positive variance to budget, and four-straight years with a favorability greater than \$1 million. During that span, OPA also lowered the assessment, and increased spending on public safety, maintenance, and drainage, among other areas.

"I have enjoyed working with a professional Board, and I'm very hopeful that we will continue, together, to produce for Ocean Pines. Our achievements over the past six years reflect the hard work and dedication of the entire Ocean Pines team. I look forward to continuing our efforts to enhance the quality of life for all our homeowners and to ensure that Ocean Pines remains a thriving and vibrant community."

Then Association President Rick Farr said extending Viola was a priority for the Board, and an easy decision based on his consistently stellar results.

"We believe that under the leadership of Mr. Viola, Ocean Pines has achieved significant milestones in keeping Ocean Pines financially strong and continuing to keep all our amenities top notch," Farr said. "The new contract reflects the Board's commitment to providing stability and continuity in leadership, and also underscores our confidence in the General Manager's vision, strategic direction, and ability to navigate the challenges and opportunities facing Ocean Pines."

"We look forward to continuing to work closely with Mr. Viola to build on our achievements and realize even greater success in the future for our Ocean Pines community," he added.



OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION

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:

Veterans Day: Mon, Nov. 11

Thanksgiving: Thu, Nov. 28 & Fri. Nov. 29

Christmas: Wed, Dec. 25 & Thu, Dec. 26

New Year's Day: Wed, Jan. 1

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Mon, Jan 20

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A Quarterly Publication by

OCEAN PINES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Annual GM report: Operations continues to thrive

General Manager John Viola, in giving his annual report on Aug. 10, highlighted how investments in the community continue to pay off.

Viola said he's been speaking at Association annual meetings since 2016 or 2017, dating back to his volunteer service as the Association's treasurer and chief financial officer, prior to becoming general manager in 2019.

He said it was "the worst of times" during those early addresses, following a \$1.6 million budget deficit, but better times were ahead.

"The bulkheads, drainage and roads [programs] were not on track. There was no mailbox initiative. Golf, Aquatics, Food and Beverage [and] Racquet Sports all operated with losses," Viola said.

Since then, a multiyear recovery period has turned into an unprecedented string of budget favorability and successes.

"Last year I spoke about [Ocean Pines] having something special here, and I still believe that's true," Viola said.

Today, Viola said the Association has an operating favorability, drainage spending has increased, bulkheads and roads replacement are part of an active strategic plan, and membership revenue is up 13%. He said the Association needs to stay the course.

Viola said the Association has totaled just over \$7 million in budget favorability since 2018. That money was reinvested and repurposed in the form of maintenance to strengthen amenities and beautify the Association, and public safety to keep the community thriving.

"We put it back into the Association," Viola said.

Director of Business Administration Linda Martin supplied an overview of amenity and support operations over the past fiscal year.

Martin said the Aquatics Department has benefited from fresh blood in a new Aquatics Director, Michelle Hitchens, and the replacement of the splash pad at the Swim and Racquet Club for \$36,040.

Racquet Sports also got a new director, Terry Underkoffler. Improvements at the center included \$25,000 worth of maintenance to the pro shop, replaced structural supports and new screens for platform tennis, and safety measures including a mold review and new line striping and speed bumps. A renovation of the Racquet Center is scheduled this winter.



Martin said the Beach Club received repaired and replaced decking, new paint inside and out, and extra palm trees this year

Maintenance at the Yacht Club included replacement of ceiling and floor tiles and new paint throughout the building, and the tiki bar was expanded to enhance the customer experience at a cost of \$197,500.

The Yacht Club Marina was designated a Maryland Clean Marina for the second straight year. Docks and decks at both the Yacht Club and Swim and Racquet Club marina were repaired, and bathrooms were improved.

Phase one of a multiyear irrigation project will soon start at the Golf Club, with the initial phase estimated at \$934,000. Martin said the course also benefited from a thatch management project program, and the addition of a new driving range building.

Recreation and Parks saw trail maintenance and several improvements to the dog park, as well as a new recreation pier and ADA kayak launch at Pintail Park.

Extra lighting and security measures were installed at the Veterans Memorial, and a new pavilion will be built prior to Veterans Day.

Support departments also contributed.

Martin said Public Relations and Marketing started a new podcast and secured an annual sponsorship. The

department oversaw the first electronic sign, increased its social media reach, cut expenses, and set a record for newsletter advertising revenue.

Martin said safety was a major focus, especially rebuilding the police force. Two new officers were sworn in, two cadets are currently in the academy, and one graduated from the police academy in December.

Maintenance efforts included 2,300 linear feet of bulkhead replacement, with buoys being repaired and replaced through Ocean Pines' waterways. Three miles of roads were paved at a cost of \$356,618.20.

Drainage investments, on top of normal annual maintenance, included ditch maintenance and \$210,637 in new pipe liners. Martin said work was shared by Public Works and outside contractors. Over the last five years, the Association has spent roughly \$1 million on new drainage improvements.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OPA ADMINISTRATION

Beautification efforts included landscaping at the North and South gates, new banners, new fountains at the north gate, and increased holiday decorations.

The community also saw new and replaced entranceway signs, including the iconic sail sign at the Yacht Club. Martin said the Association continued phase one of the mailbox replacement project, which has included cleaning and replacing mailbox pedestals.

She said operations worked with Board advisory committees, at the direction of the Board, on projects ranging from trail improvements to tree trimming and new plantings.

On the customer service front, 1,380 Compliance, Permit and Inspection (CPI) violations were initiated over the last year - 900 more than the prior year. More than 1,000 violations were closed and just under 300 remain open. There were also 1,424 new work orders and 1,236 closed orders.

Martin said there were 1,649 emails received through the info@oceanpines.org email address, including 749 general questions, 484 about amenities, 209 about CPI issues, 191 on Public Works, and 16 about drainage.

On the financial side, Viola said budget favorability for the

last fiscal year was approximately \$1.2 million. He recognized Finance Director Steve Phillips, as well as the Budget and Finance Committee for their assistance.

Again, he said several years of investments into amenities are paying off.

“Golf is driving [the favorability], but so are all our amenities,” Viola said. “We have very good amenities, we build them up, we support them, they’re turnkey ... and they’re all positive.”

Viola said the Association has invested in public safety through increased salaries, a pension equivalent, and investments in the Volunteer Fire Department. He said public safety used to make up roughly 20% of the budget -

now it’s closer to 40%.

“That money came from organic growth, as well as expense reallocation,” Viola said.

Reserve levels have risen to approximately \$7 million, which Viola called “a goldilocks situation.”

The budget favorability also helped lower the assessment over the last several years. The basic annual assessment was \$921 in 2018. It rose to \$996 in 2022, and today is at an eight-year low of \$850.

“Again, I would term that a goldilocks situation,” Viola said.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OPA ADMINISTRATION

Please do your part to keep our community clean

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola is urging residents and visitors to take an active role in keeping the community clean.

The Association has received complaints about trash, pet waste, and other debris left at both the Ocean Pines Yacht Club and Beach Club.

To help combat these issues, Viola said the Association will install additional trash cans, and attempt to raise public awareness through online and social media posts.

The Association invites all community members to be part of the solution by disposing of their trash properly and picking up after their pets.

“Please do your part to keep our community clean,” Viola said. “We believe that by working together, we can maintain the beauty and cleanliness of Ocean Pines for everyone to enjoy.”



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

Ocean Pines residents and property owners interested in adding holiday cheer to the community are invited to participate in this year’s “Light Up the Pines” outdoor decorating program.

Those who register with the program will be featured on an online Google map, which will include locations of the decorated properties.

Participants will also be entered into a drawing to win one of three \$50 bill credits donated by Choptank Electric Cooperative, which sponsors the program. Additionally, the first 25 registered participants will receive a small goody bag, also courtesy of Choptank Electric.

Beginning Nov. 18, households interested in participating should submit a name, address and phone number via email to info@oceanpines.org or by calling 410-641-7717 ext. 3014.

The initial deadline to register is Friday, Dec. 13, although residents may continue to sign up after this date and through the holiday season to have their homes included on the online map.



Light up the Pines

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

Brighten the Ocean Pines Community by registering your home for this **FREE** annual outdoor decorating event.

Register by Dec. 9 to be entered into the drawing to win one of three \$50 bill credits from Choptank Electric Cooperative!

The first 25 homes to sign up will receive Choptank Electric goodies!

**REGISTRATION:
NOV 20 THROUGH DEC 8**

*Homes registered after Dec. 9 will still be added to the online map

**HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPANTS:
SUBMIT NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER
VIA EMAIL TO [INFO@OCEANPINES.ORG](mailto:info@oceanpines.org)
OR BY CALLING 410-641-7717 EXT. 3014**

PARTICIPANTS ARE ALSO ASKED TO SUBMIT A PHOTO OF THEIR LIGHTED HOME FOR A SPECIAL HOLIDAY VIDEO

Visit oceanpines.org for an online map of participating homes



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OPA, OPVFD approve historic new agreement

The Ocean Pines Association Board on July 12 unanimously approved a new memorandum of understanding with the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department.

The agreement includes provisions for fire protection and EMS services by OPVFD, funding of the Fire Department by OPA, and construction of a new South Fire Station.

Several OPA Board members and OPVFD President Joe Enste commented on the new agreement during the meeting:

Then Association President Rick Farr:

“Tonight, I would like to thank my fellow Board members, our General Manager John Viola and his team, Chairman Doug Parks from the Budget and Finance Committee, Ocean Pines Council Bruce Bright, the leadership of Ocean Pines Fire Department: President Enste and Chief Widgeon and the Board and the Fire Department General Counsel Genevieve Macfarlane, for bringing us to where we are today, a historical moment for Ocean Pines. This team has worked together for the past several months, where the relationship with Ocean Pines Association and the Fire Department has become very strong with one collective goal in mind, which is to continue to provide outstanding emergency medical services [and] fire and rescue protection services to all of Ocean Pines residents, with state-of-the-art equipment and a state-of-the-art new building. This new memorandum of understanding and provisions within this agreement between Ocean Pines Association and the Volunteer Fire Department accomplishes this goal. Again, thanks to everyone in making this agreement a reality.”

OPVFD President Joe Enste:

“Tonight, we have an opportunity to make history as we consider a new memorandum of understanding between the Ocean Pines Association and the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department. Our team at the Fire Department has been working tirelessly behind the scenes with President Farr, Vice President Lakernick, Director Heavner, representatives of the Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. John Viola, Mrs. Linda Martin and Mr. Steve Phillips. Together, we have crafted an MOU that is fair to both sides and designed to stand the test of time. For those who may be wondering why there is a need for a new MOU, the original MOU was ratified in 1975 and then replaced with a new version in 1977. Over the years,



numerous addendums have been added, complicating the relationship between the OPVFD and the OPA. The proposed MOU we are considering tonight aims to clarify the relationship and the responsibilities of each organization, ensuring a clear and effective partnership now and in the future. As one of only 10 recognized and chartered volunteer fire

departments within the Worcester County, we take our responsibility to provide fire and EMS service to this community very seriously. For over 50 years, we have proudly served this community. And this new agreement, if approved tonight, will allow us to continue serving for many years to come. Thank you in advance of the Board of Directors for your consideration.”

Association Treasurer Monica Rakowski:

“It was time for OPA to reopen the door for negotiations to get this deal done with our Fire Department. This deal is a win for our Fire Department and our membership. It’s a win for everybody. This deal goes a long way to supporting recruitment and retention of our firefighters. It is up to us, OPA, to help sustain a robust and active force of firefighters. Supporting our Volunteer Fire Department has a direct and measurable impact on public safety. Communities with well-funded and adequately staffed fire departments often have a lower home insurance rates, reflecting the lower risk of significant fire damage. I thank the Fire Department and my colleagues for this team effort in getting us to this point.”

Director Jeff Heavner:

“This is indeed a new era of cooperation. It’s more like getting a new in-law through marriage, but one that you really like. A carefully crafted memorandum of understanding will enable the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department to provide exceptional fire protection and emergency medical and rescue services for decades to come. This Board continues to bring out the best in each of us and deliver wins for our Association, spending money wisely and focused on our strategic plan. I might sound like a broken record, but it really matters. We are all dialed in to keep Ocean Pines a premier resort community, with exceptional value and quality of life. This vision is built upon five support pillars: quality governance, superior safety, top-tier amenities, fiscally responsible infrastructure maintenance, (cont. on pg. 28)

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LAURA DEELEY BREN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OPA ADMINISTRATION

(cont. from pg. 26) and community beautification. Our priorities continue to evolve with our successes. Getting a multiyear deal done with John Viola was on our short list, and getting this MOU deal done is huge. I have been involved in this top priority, and I urge my fellow Directors to approve this when we vote very shortly. The community and our Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Department are winners. We have and continue, like Rick says, to build a first class, and as referenced, a family relationship.”

Association Secretary John Latham:

“I just want to thank you all tremendously. Thanks for working with our group and getting it done. All the hard work is starting to pay off here. We’re happy to support it. Thanks for making our community safe, and ... you’ll get my support.”

Director Elaine Brady:

“It’s 100% groups working together that make these things happen. And I’m just thrilled that in the short span of time we were able to do that. Bruce, also thank you, because I know you knocked this thing out in record time in order to satisfy everybody’s concerns, gather the input that was coming from everyone, and draft a document that really will serve us well into the future.”

Then Association Vice President Dr. Stuart Lakernick:

“I just wanted to comment on the professionalism of the Fire Department’s executive board, their team, their president, their chief. We are all in this together, and this makes us a big one instead of two. And I just wanted to thank you guys.”

Record-breaking July 4

Ocean Pines Association General Manager John Viola announced a record-breaking July 4 weekend, with large crowds and strong financial returns bolstered by great weather and smooth-running operations.

“Our amenities were in turnkey condition prior to the holiday, which helped us achieve these numbers,” Viola said. “Compliments go to our support team, which makes all this possible.”

Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue said a record 270 runners took part in the annual Freedom 5K on the morning of July 4. She said the carnival that afternoon had robust attendance, and roughly 3,000 people watched fireworks from multiple locations across Ocean Pines.

Matt Ortt said the Yacht Club, Beach Club and Clubhouse Grille saw record numbers across the four-day weekend. The Yacht Club featured live music Thursday through Sunday and sales were well up over the prior year.

The Ocean Pines Marina was also busy and set a new sales record over the weekend.

Golf Director Bob Beckelman said the entire July 4 week was very busy, with total rounds and revenue well up over the prior year.

Aquatics Director Michelle Hitchens said the four outdoor pools operated at or near capacity throughout the weekend.

The new Swim and Racquet Club snack bar was a big hit, she added.

Racquet Sports Director Terry Underkoffler said the Racquet Center was packed, with all courts filled and people waiting to play.

Public Works Director Eddie Wells said things also went well behind the scenes, calling it one of the smoothest July 4 weekends in years. He said his team received only minor complaints, and events went off without a hitch.

Police Chief Tim Robinson said there were a few fireworks complaints, and one minor traffic accident on July 4 with no injuries.

“Overall, there was a lot of traffic and a lot of people, and everybody behaved. There were no significant issues,” he said. “Ocean Pines Police, along with our allied partners, were able to get everybody in and out of events as quickly as possible.”

Viola complimented staff for coordinating a safe, well organized and profitable weekend.

“I appreciate all the hard work from the team, and the excellent communication and coordination,” he said. “Ocean Pines residents and guests saw all that we had to offer, and we broke several records. We couldn’t be happier with how everything turned out.”





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Steve Phillips
Director of Finance/
Controller

New fiscal year starts on positive note

Ocean Pines Association has started off the first quarter of the new fiscal year with a very favorable performance to date. Year-to-date through July, OPA has produced \$432,000 in favorability when compared to the operating budget.

Approximately \$395,000 of the favorable operating results are driven by amenities' revenues in excess of budget. Golf once again leads the charge, producing net operating revenue results greater than \$112,000 over the budget. Golf's bottom-line operating income was \$571,000, which is also approximately \$112,000 favorable to the budget.

The remainder of the amenity net revenue favorability can be attributed to the Beach Club, Beach Parking, Aquatics, Clubhouse Grille and the Marinas. Membership revenue in total for all amenities through July exceeded of \$1.278 million, which is approximately \$55,000 in excess of the full-year membership budget.

As the season turns to fall, this signals the kick-off to OPA's annual budget process. The Budget and Finance Committee will provide their guidance recommendations to the Board and the GM in advance of the preparation of the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26 budget. Finance will begin preparing requested deliverables, as they begin working closely with the budget managers within each respective department to produce their "bottoms-up" budgets for internal review.



SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

YEAR-TO-DATE 7/31/2024

OPERATING ACCOUNT SUMMARY

UNAUDITED

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)			
REVENUES			
Assessments	8,163	8,149	14
Grants	588	563	25
Amenities (Net)	4,146	3,804	342
Recreation & Parks	220	232	(12)
Other fees and Income	<u>537</u>	<u>403</u>	<u>134</u>
Total Revenues	13,654	13,151	503
Add: Budgeted Surplus Transfer	913	913	-
Less: Transfers to Reserve Accounts	<u>(3,287)</u>	<u>(3,179)</u>	<u>(108)</u>
Net Operating Revenues	11,280	10,885	395
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Administration & Management	637	672	35
Amenities	2,053	1,945	(108)
Recreation & Parks	348	361	13
Police	515	546	31
Fire / EMS	253	253	-
Public Works / CPI	453	524	71
General Maintenance	<u>193</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>(5)</u>
Total Operating Expenses	4,452	4,489	37
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	6,828	6,396	432
NEW CAPITAL			
NET	6,828	6,396	432

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Linda Martin
Director of
Business Admin.

The plight of the trash cans continues throughout Ocean Pines.

Section 8.A.i. of the Declaration of Restrictions states, "Every outdoor receptacle for ashes, trash, rubbish or garbage shall be screened or so placed and kept as not to be visible from any street, waterway or golf course within the Section or Subdivision at any time except during refuse collections."

Section 500.2.B. of the Architectural Review Guidelines states, "Trash and rubbish containers are required and shall be concealed. An enclosed service area, behind the front foundation line and large enough to store two (2) 20-gallon containers for ashes, trash, rubbish, or garbage, is required. An enclosed garage, shed or utility structure, satisfies this requirement if utilized for this purpose. The area may also be screened by fencing/lattice or shrubbery of the evergreen variety."

Yet, riding around Ocean Pines, trash cans continue to be stored near the roadway or on the driveway, and the Compliance, Permits, and Inspections (CPI) department continues to receive complaints. Please store your trash cans where they cannot be seen on non-trash days.



Let's talk trash!

And leaves ...

As you are aware, there are a plethora of leaves in Ocean Pines. And as a reminder, last year Public Works stopped vacuuming the leaves raked up to the road. While they continued to pick up leaves in paper bags, there were still 150 homes that raked leaves up to the roadway, which caused CPI to issue violations on those properties. Please bag your leaves to avoid the violation.



Along with Public Works picking up bagged leaves, Republic Services will be providing special leaf pick-up days in addition to the current yard waste pick up they perform once a week. The dates are:

- Nov. 9
- Nov. 16
- Nov. 23
- Dec. 7
- Dec. 21
- Dec. 21

Leaves must be placed by the roadway in paper bags, as the leaves will be recycled.

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Eddie Wells
Senior Director

Message from PUBLIC WORKS

FAQ about leaf removal

Will Ocean Pines collect my yard leaves this fall?

Yes. Ocean Pines residents and property owners have several options for disposing of leaves that have fallen in their yards: bagged leaf collection, and yard waste disposal at the Ocean Pines Public Works yard.

Republic Services customers may also use their biweekly trash collection service to dispose of yard waste.

When will bagged leaves be collected?

Ocean Pines Public Works will collect bagged leaves from Nov.25-Jan.3 Bagged leaves will be picked up on days opposite of Republic Services' regularly scheduled collection days.

If Republic Services normally collects your trash on Mondays and Thursdays, which are the scheduled collection days for all Ocean Pines homes north of the Route 90 bridge, Ocean Pines will collect bagged leaves in your neighborhood on Tuesdays and Fridays.

If Republic Services normally collects your trash on Tuesdays and Fridays, which are the scheduled collection days for all Ocean Pines homes south of the Route 90 bridge, Ocean Pines will collect bagged leaves in your neighborhood on Mondays and Thursdays.

Is there a limit to how many bags I can place at the curb for collection?

There is no limit to the number of bags that Public Works will collect curbside. Republic Services will collect up to four bags of leaves for each regularly scheduled trash collection day.

Can I include other yard debris (grass clippings, weeds, branches, etc.) with the bagged leaves?

Ocean Pines' bagged leaf collection is restricted to leaves. Republic Services customers can include leaves and yard debris in bags left curbside; branches should be tied in bundles no longer than four feet.

When will the Public Works yard be open for yard waste disposal?

The Ocean Pines Public Works yard, located at 1 Firehouse Lane next to Ocean Pines Public Works and the south Fire Department, will be open to Ocean Pines residents and property owners **Nov. 25–Jan. 3, Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m.** The yard will be closed Nov. 28-30 Thanksgiving and Dec. 25-26 for the Christmas holiday.

Can I bring yard waste in addition to leaves to the Public Works yard?

Yes. All types of yard debris may be dropped off. Please note that plastic bags will not be accepted – yard waste must be brought in loose or in paper bags only.

Will the vacuum truck collect all my yard leaves?

No. The vacuum truck option is no longer available.



Nobie Violante
Assistant Director

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Ron Fisher
Dock Master

Our marinas are closed for the season on Nov. 1. and will re-open May 1, 2025.

If you are interested in renting a slip at the Yacht Club marina or at the Swim and Racquet Club marina for the 2025 season or if you have questions regarding the use of



boat slips or ramps, please call the Ocean Pines Marina at 410-641-7447 or the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department 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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Message from the CHIEF OF POLICE



Tim Robinson
Chief of Police

Please be vigilant around school buses

With the start of a new school year, we're seeing school buses back on the busy roads of Ocean Pines. With that, I'd like to take a moment to remind everyone of their responsibilities when encountering a school bus with its red flashing lights activated.

According to Maryland state law, drivers must stop at least 20 feet away from a stopped school bus and remain

stopped until the bus resumes moving, or the red lights turn off.

Although much of Ocean Parkway is considered a divided highway because of the median strip, most school bus stops are near intersections where the median ends, meaning all drivers, in both directions, are required to stop.

The penalty for illegally passing a school bus with red lights flashing is a \$570 fine and three points on your license.

More importantly, you could put the life of a child in danger. Please be vigilant, follow the law, and help us keep our children safe.



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Sign up for local alerts & warnings. Monitor news & weather reports.
Prepare to evacuate by testing your emergency communication plan(s), learning evacuation routes, having a place to stay & packing a "go bag."
Stock emergency supplies.
Protect your property by installing sewer backflow valves, anchoring fuel tanks, reviewing insurance policies & cataloging belongings.
Collect & safeguard critical financial, medical, educational & legal documents & records.

DURING / SURVIVE

Follow guidance from local authorities.
If advised to evacuate, grab your "go bag" & leave immediately.
For protection from high winds, stay away from windows & seek shelter on the lowest level in an interior room.
Move to higher ground if there is flooding or a flood warning.
"Turn Around Don't Drown." Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through water.
Call 9-1-1 if you are in life-threatening danger.

AFTER / BE SAFE

Return to the area only after authorities say it is safe to do so. Do not enter damaged buildings until they are inspected by qualified professionals.
Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters.
Look out for downed or unstable trees, poles & power lines.
Do not remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear gloves & sturdy, thick-soled shoes to protect your hands & feet.
Do not drink tap water unless authorities say it is safe.

For more resources about hurricane risk, visit ready.gov/prepare

NOW HIRING



OCEAN PINES POLICE IS HIRING! NEW RECRUITS & CERTIFIED OFFICERS

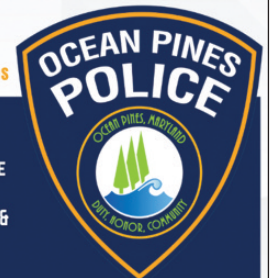
\$63,500

(Salary paid during training process \$61k)

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Salary is negotiable for experienced lateral applicants depending on experience & qualifications

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- FULL MEDICAL COVERAGE
- VACATION, PAID HOLIDAYS AND SICK LEAVE
- COMPETITIVE RETIREMENT PLAN
- PINES PERKS PROGRAMS (SWIM, RACQUET & GOLF MEMBERSHIPS)
- GYM REIMBURSEMENT



INFO & APPLICATION

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OCEAN PINES POLICE DEPT

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A FULL-SERVICE POLICE AGENCY IN WORCESTER COUNTY, MD

OPPD receives more than \$61,000 in grants to bolster public safety

The Ocean Pines Association Police Department has been awarded multiple grants that will help offset rising public safety costs and support the department's ongoing efforts to keep Ocean Pines as one of the safest communities in the United States.

The grants, awarded by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and the Maryland Highway Safety Office, will benefit Ocean Pines homeowners and residents by enhancing officer safety, increasing law enforcement visibility at community events, and improving transparency within the department.

"These grants are critical in helping us meet the growing needs of our community," Police Chief Tim Robinson said. "They will ensure we can continue to provide high-level safety and security for Ocean Pines, while keeping costs manageable for our residents."

The following grants were awarded to the Ocean Pines Association Police Department by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention:

- **Body Armor Grant:** \$3,891 from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention will cover 50% of the cost of a new vest for an officer, ensuring the department's officers remain protected while on duty.
- **Community Grant Program:** \$4,456 will fund overtime expenses for Ocean Pines Police officers to provide a visible presence at large community events, increasing safety for attendees.
- **Police Accountability, Community, and Transparency (PACT) Grant:** A \$35,000 grant will be used to purchase new and advanced body cameras, enhancing both officer accountability and transparency within the department.
- **Police Recruitment and Retention Grant:** \$15,125 will be used for recruitment and retention incentives, aiding the department in attracting and keeping qualified officers.

Additional grants from the Maryland Highway Safety Office:

- **Speed Enforcement Grant:** \$900 will support speed enforcement initiatives, promoting safer driving on community roads.
- **Impaired Driving Grant:** \$1,035 will fund efforts to reduce impaired driving incidents, ensuring the safety of all road users.
- **Occupant Protection Grant:** \$990 will promote occupant safety, such as seat belt and child safety seat enforcement.

Robinson said these grants, which total more than \$60,000, are part of a larger effort to sustain Ocean Pines' status as one of the nation's safest residential communities.

"We are proud to serve the people of Ocean Pines, and these funds will help us continue to deliver top-tier public safety services," he said.

For more information on the Ocean Pines Police Department, visit www.oceanpinespolice.com.



Police Department issues warning on email scams

The Ocean Pines Police Department is alerting residents and visitors about recent reports of fraudulent emails circulating that appear to be from legitimate sources within Ocean Pines.

These emails often request assistance with a project or involvement in a financial transaction. The intent behind these phishing emails is to fraudulently obtain money or gain access to private financial information.

The Police Department urges the community to use caution and avoid opening or responding to any emails that seem suspicious.

For more information on phishing scams, visit www.occ.gov/topics/consumers-and-communities/consumer-protection/fraud-resources/phishing-attack-prevention.html.

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OCEAN PINES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



Joe Enste

OPVFD President

"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

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," OPVFD President Joe Enste said.

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

2024

FUND DRIVE



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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54

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Saturdays 9am to 1pm & 6pm to 9pm

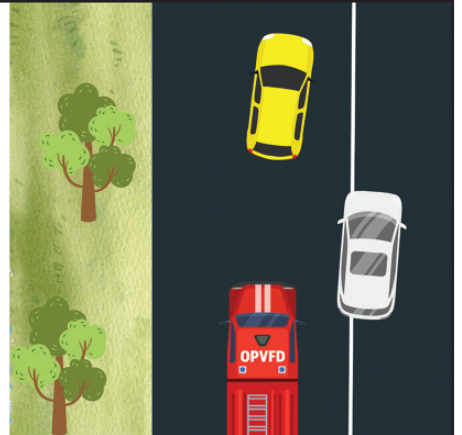
Sundays 10am to 1pm



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For moving emergency vehicles



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Debbie Donahue
Director of
Recreation & Parks

Gearing up for all things fall and winter

Some of the upcoming special events include: Family Bingo, Pumpkin Painting, Fall Festival, Haunted House, Holiday Breakfast and Reindeer Lane, and let's not forget that annual trip to New York City.

Our sports programs will begin in November, starting with youth basketball clinic starting Nov. 9. Come out and work on those skills before the Youth Basketball League starts in January. Youth Basketball League is always looking for volunteer coaches. Call Kevin at the Recreation Dept. for more information.

Youth Soccer is one of the programs that fills up quickly, due to limited indoor space. The indoor season will start Feb. 5 (ages 2-3 and 4-6), Wednesday night in the gym. Spots fill up fast! Call to register or stop by.

Let's not forget our adult leagues! The Men's Basketball League starts March 20, individual or a full team. Give us a call and we will get you in.

If you can dodge a ball, give us a call! Wall-to-Wall Adult Dodgeball is back again this year, starting Jan. 22. Give us a call for more information.

Classes and seminars, oh my!!! Zumba, tai chi, yoga, Pilates and line dancing will have multiple sessions throughout the year. Also coming this fall, Mommy and Me Dance Class. Lots of FREE seminars are available throughout the year: Retirement 101, Fall Prevention, Nutrition, and many other subjects. Call to get more information and let us know you are interested in the information.

Ocean Pines Farmers Market: The Farmer's Market is still going strong, and they will continue to have hours throughout the winter. Check the website for current market hours, as they change throughout the season. Coming NEW in 2025 are Holiday Special Events at the market. Stay tuned for some fun new holiday additions.

The Pioneer Artisan Gift Shop is open Saturdays and Sundays throughout the winter alongside of the Farmers Market. Stop by the shop! The handmade pieces in this gift shop are amazing and looking for a new home. The Winter Wonderland Artisans & Craft Fair will be held in the Recreation Building on Nov. 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come by and pick up those special holiday gifts.

Community organizations: There are many different community organizations within Ocean Pines, such as the Ocean Pines Bowling League, OP Community Gardens, Pine Steppers, Duplicate Bridge, Shape Ups, Line Dancing, Quilters by The Sea, Veterans Memorial Group, Table Tennis, and so much more. A list is always available at the Community Center.

Special events: Back by popular demand - Hometown Christmas, Nov.30. Join Ocean Pines and the surrounding

community for another great year of tree lighting. Light up White Horse Park by purchasing/sponsoring a tree in the park. Trees are normally sponsored by local businesses, nonprofit organizations, social clubs and family members. Call Katie Goetzing for more information on how to be a part of Hometown Christmas event.

Family Bingo, Pumpkin Painting, Fall Festival, Haunted House, Holiday Breakfast, and many more holiday events are coming up.

Be A Santa to a Senior – Home Instead: One program that we love to be a part of is "Be a Santa to A Senior," sponsored by Home Instead. Ornaments/tags with the names of seniors in the community will be placed on a tree in the lobby of the Community Center, starting Nov. 4 and will run through Dec.2. Stop by and pick up an ornament and make Christmas a special time for a senior. Giving is always better than receiving.

Bus trips coming soon: Let's enjoy the holidays, with a trip to New York City. I bet if you look hard enough you will find Buddy the Elf! Dec. 7, we take a trip to the Big Apple for the day. Shop 'til you drop, see a show, have an amazing dinner, enjoy all the sights for the holidays in the big city.

ANNIE @ The Hippodrome Theater, Jan.12: It's a Hard Knock Life, but Annie brings life and exuberance to the stage. Celebrating family, optimism and the American spirit. Give us a call for more information.

Spend a day in Philadelphia and/or DC, taking in all that they have to offer, museums, restaurants, and shopping.

Join us March 1 for the Philadelphia Flower Show. Acres of Floral Gardens, landscaping exhibits, unique plants and so many other displays and items will be for sale.

Keep an eye out for NEW and upcoming bus trips!

As always, the community center has rooms available for rent for those holiday parties, birthday parties, weddings, and more. Give us a call and Jackie, Madison, Cindy, Dot, Kathy, Katelynne and Michelle will be happy to find you the perfect room for your event.

The fall and winter Activity Guide is available at the Recreation Department, or you can view it on oceanpines.org.

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

Everyone stay safe and healthy! Hope to see you soon.





2024-2025

OCEAN PINES FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Events & Happenings

SATURDAYS IN WHITE HORSE PARK

thru March 29, 2025 9am–12pm

April 2025–August 2025 8am–1pm

OCT 19 PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Enjoy an unforgettable experience of choosing the perfect pumpkin, get lost in our artisan village & enjoy a glass of fresh-pressed apple cider!

OCT 26 HALLOWEEN MARKET

When black cats prowl & pumpkins gleam throughout the marketplace.

NOV 23 THANKSGIVING HARVEST FESTIVAL

All of the best fixings for your Thanksgiving table & home. Food, demos, contests, live music & more.

TUES. NOV 26 THANKSGIVING HARVEST FESTIVAL & TURKEY MARKET (TUESDAY 9-11am)

Come gather the seasonal bounty & bring Thanksgiving to your home from the Ocean Pines marketplace.

NOV 30 SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Visit & shop the many unique marketplace shops, boutiques & galleries for one-of-a-kind gifts.

DEC 7-21 CHRISTMAS TINSEL & TWINE MARKETPLACE

This holiday festival is a month-long event, held from the first Saturday in December through Christmas. Visit & shop the many unique marketplace shops, boutiques & galleries for one-of-a-kind gifts from merchants that are truly glad you came by!

FEB 15 SWEETHEARTS MARKET

Market activities, music & everything you need for a special Valentine's Day weekend dinner.

MARCH 15 CELEBRATING THE GREEN

Everyone's a little bit Irish on this day! Welcome the return of spring & many seasonal market merchants.

APRIL 19 EASTER MAGIC

Decadent baked goods, early spring produce & blooming spring flowers. Don't forget the eggs!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK & STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING MARKET EVENTS!



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Peletier given Sam Wilkinson Volunteer Award

Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Director Debbie Donahue named Barbara Peletier as the recipient of the 2023 Sam Wilkinson Volunteer Award.

Since 2003, the award has recognized local people who dedicate their time and talents to help others. The award also honors the memory of its namesake, 8-year-old Sam Wilkinson, who died in a tragic water accident in Ocean City.

Sam played soccer in Ocean Pines and his father, Bob, was a volunteer coach for Ocean Pines Recreation programs. The award was established to recognize a volunteer within the Recreation and Parks Department.

Donahue described Peletier as a tireless volunteer who has spent the last two decades helping groups including the Kiwanis, Worcester GOLD, the AARP, Diakonia, the Cricket Center, Star Charities, and the Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks Department.

“She learned from her mother at an early age to care for others before herself. The very young and the older folks have always had a special place in Barbara’s heart,” Donahue said.

As a young mother, Peletier raised three children, volunteered for their sports teams, and worked at a pediatrician’s office. She became an office manager for a general practitioner and later managed a cardiology office caring for geriatric patients.

After retiring to Ocean Pines in 2003, Peletier quickly found ways to help the community through volunteer work.

“As a Kiwanis member, she led numerous Kiwanis fundraisers,” Donahue said. That included pancake breakfasts, German dinners, fruit sales and raffle ticket sales.

“At the Sunfest beer sales, the Kiwanis station sang and danced and were considered the most fun-loving vendor by the customers,” Donahue said. “For years, she ran the Kiwanis Dawg Team and became known for her home-baked minipies that the customers requested by name.”

She also hosted cleanup days at Horses for the Handicapped events, organized Kiwanis Christmas parties, installation dinners and pancake breakfasts, and served two terms as president of the club.

Donahue said Peletier supported Worcester GOLD for 20 years, donating gifts for two families at Christmas, school



supplies in the fall, and turkeys at Thanksgiving. She also participated in AARP food drives and served as event organizer for many of the Star Charities events created by the late Anna Foulz.

In recent years, Peletier ran the Diakonia homeless pantry, distributing bags of food to as many as 20 local families each day. She has participated

in Cricket Center walks for abused children on the Ocean City Boardwalk, and she currently works with the Twilight Wish Foundation to fulfill wishes of local elderly.

Donahue said Peletier has cooked for Recreation and Parks’ “Breakfast with Santa” events and helped in the Reindeer Lane gift shop. She also cooked and served breakfast for Easter events and set up and served food at Concerts in the Park.

“Her latest volunteer opportunity came when she came to my office asking for some volunteer work,” Donahue said. “She scheduled times throughout a few weeks to come in and help me box up old paperwork, label boxes and make room for new stuff. While she was there, she could be found wandering into the kitchen, tidying things up.”

From helping children, to the elderly, to Ocean Pines department heads, Peletier has always shown a giving spirit and boundless energy.

“You can always call, and very rarely will she tell you no. She is always available for us no matter what it is. Today, she actually thought we needed her help for a craft class!” Donahue said with a laugh.

“This year’s Volunteer of the Year is an amazing woman that we can always count on being a big part of all that we do here at the Recreation Department,” she continued. “We appreciate her more than she will ever know.”

Peletier, in accepting the award, said she came there expecting to work.

“Thank you all. I really appreciate it,” she said, adding to Donahue with a laugh, “I can’t trust you!”



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Vienna Boys Choir to perform in Ocean City, Dec. 10

The Vienna Boys Choir, one of the world’s most renowned choirs, will perform at the Ocean City Convention Center on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m.

This event, presented by the Ocean Pines Association Recreation and Parks Department, promises a memorable evening of Christmas music and classical masterpieces.

Event Coordinator Kevin Powell said he was asked to think outside the box to develop fresh and new event programming.

“Having heard them perform in 2022, I thought this would be a great event for Ocean Pines and the surrounding area,” Powell said. “It would be enjoyed by many people as a Christmas concert, and it would also bring some revenue to the Rec Department and potentially build a relationship with their management agency. We would love to be able to do this sort of thing more often and bring more world-renowned artists to our area.”

Powell said the demand for tickets has already been high.

“I’ve had people clamoring for tickets already because it’s the first time they’ve ever come to our area, and they are one of the finest choirs on the planet,” he said.

The event will be held at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, because of the lack of an adequate venue in Ocean Pines for a concert this large.

About the Vienna Boys Choir: The Vienna Boys Choir has been delighting music lovers across the globe for six centuries with their purity of tone, distinctive charm, and

popular repertoire. The enormously popular chorus is composed of four touring choirs that hail from dozens of nations and together give over 300 concerts a year around the world.

Christmas in Vienna showcases these gifted musicians with voices of unforgettable beauty in an extraordinary program featuring Austrian folk songs, classical masterpieces, popular songs, and, of course, holiday favorites.

The Vienna Boys Choir is a private, nonprofit organization that relies on sponsorship and donations. The Choir maintains a primary school, a junior, and a senior high school. Three hundred boys and girls between the ages of six and 19 attend the Choir’s Schools in Vienna’s Augarten park. All receive individual voice lessons and sing in one of the choirs. About a third of the students go on to become music professionals.

The 100 boy choristers, between the ages of nine and fourteen, are divided into four choirs. Since 1924, the boys have sung over 1,000 tours in 100 different countries, resulting in 29,000 performances. The Vienna Boys Choir’s singing tradition is listed by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage in Austria.

Tickets range from \$40-\$70. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/46426120/vienna-boys-choir-performing-christmas-in-vienna-ocean-city-oc-performing-arts-center>.

Annual Doggie Swim was splashing success

Thank you to all who joined us at the annual Doggie Swim at Mumford’s Landing pool after closing for the season. It was a splashing success, and we’re thrilled to see so many pups having fun in the sun.

Your participation and generosity helped raise funds for the Worcester County Humane Society (no-kill shelter), supporting their amazing work in our community. To help support them, visit worcestercountychumanesociety.org.

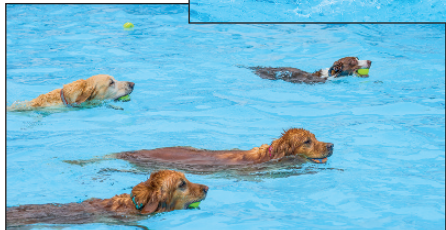
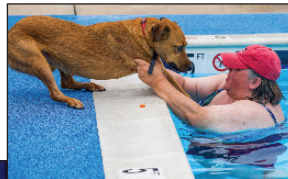
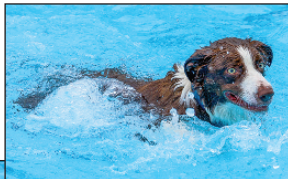




photo by Lukas Beck

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VIENNA BOYS CHOIR

Performs Christmas in Vienna

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This renowned children's choir, with a six-century legacy, captivates global audiences with their pure tone and charm. The ensemble includes four touring choirs with boys from dozens of nations, performing over 300 concerts annually. "Christmas in Vienna" highlights their unforgettable voices through Austrian folk songs, classical pieces, popular tunes, and holiday favorites.

To order tickets, open your phone and scan the QR code

Tickets: Range from \$40-\$70

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FOR MORE INFO: 410-641-7052

Ocean Pines Community Center | 235 Ocean Pkwy, Ocean Pines, MD 21811 | oceanpines.org

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Michelle Hitchens

Aquatics Director

Soak up new programs and special events

Join us at the Sports Core Pool for all our fall and winter programs! We have some exciting new offerings in our lineup, including Evening Water Aerobics. Plus, check out our upcoming special events:

- **Halloween Swim – Sat, Oct. 19**
- **Swim with Santa – Sat, Dec. 21**
- **Valentine Swim – Sat, Feb. 15**

Private and semi-private swim lessons: Are you an adult who never

learned how to swim, or do you have a child who can't make our scheduled group sessions? We'd love to help! We offer private and semi-private swim lessons for all!

- *Lesson duration: 30 or 45 minutes (depending on the swimmer's age and attention span)*
- *We'll match you with an instructor who will work around your schedule and needs.*

Rates:

- *30-minute private (one swimmer to one instructor) – \$35 per lesson*
- *45-minute private – \$50 per lesson*
- *45-minute semi-private (two or three swimmers to one instructor) – \$50 per lesson, split between participants*

To schedule your swim lessons or for more information, call the Sports Core Pool at 410-641-5255.

Junior Lifeguard Program: Attention, kids! We're now offering our Junior Lifeguard Program this fall and winter, instructed by Steve Yarzinsky and his team. This educational, hands-on course is designed to teach students about:

- *Water safety*
- *Rescue techniques*
- *Teamwork*
- *Fun!*

Your children will practice lifesaving water skills, swimming endurance, and learn how to handle emergencies, including first aid and an introduction to CPR. It's a great opportunity to build water skills on their days off from school!

Program requirements:

- *Must be a strong swimmer*
- *Able to swim the length of the pool and tread water for one minute*

Program dates: **Friday, Oct. 18, Tuesday, Nov. 5, Monday, Jan. 27, and Friday, April 4**

All sessions are from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Rates: (Rates include a Jr. Lifeguard t-shirt.)

- *Ocean Pines Resident – \$75*
- *Non-Resident – \$80*

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Fees must be paid in full 30 days prior to event

Call Sports Core Pool for all party information and scheduling!
410.641.5255

PRIVATE

POOL PARTIES
IN OCEAN PINES, MARYLAND

\$375
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WATER VOLLEYBALL

WHEN: MON 12 classes (6 weeks)

TIME: 2:00pm-3:30pm

thru OCT 21

NOV 4 - DEC 9

DEC 23 - JAN 27

FEE: Swim Member \$30 (drop-in \$6); OP Resident \$35 (drop-in \$7); Non-Resident \$45 (drop-in \$8)

New! BIKE / TRAMP

WHEN: FRI, 9:00am-9:40am 12 classes (6 weeks)

OCT 11 - NOV 15

NOV 22 - JAN 17 No Class 11/29, 12/27, 1/3

FEE: Swim Member \$45 (drop-in \$9); OP Resident \$48 (drop-in \$11); Non-Resident \$50 (drop-in \$13)

SWIMMIN WIMMIN: DEEP WATER & men!

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

thru OCT 25

Instructor: Kathy Emmert

OCT 28 - DEC 6

Instructor: Kathy Emmert

DEC 9 - JAN 17 No Class 12/25

Instructor: Kathy Emmert

SWIMMIN WIMMIN: SHALLOW WATER & men!

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

thru OCT 25

Instructor: Betsy Wodja

OCT 28 - DEC 6

Instructor: Betsy Wodja

DEC 9 - JAN 17 No Class 12/25

Instructor: Betsy Wodja

FEE: Swim Member \$55 (drop-in \$6); OP Resident \$65 (drop-in \$7); Non-Resident \$81 (drop-in \$8)

TOTAL BODY FITNESS I

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

thru OCT 14 (Mon)

OCT 21 - DEC 4 No Class 11/25, 11/27

DEC 16 - JAN 29 No Class 12/25, 1/1

TOTAL BODY FITNESS II

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

thru OCT 10

OCT 22 - DEC 3 No Class 11/26, 11/28

DEC 17 - JAN 30 No Class 12/24, 12/31

POOL: Sports Core

FEE: (18-class session): Swim Member \$88; OP Resident \$100; Non-Resident \$120; (12-class session): Swim Member \$59; OP Resident \$66; Non-Resident \$80; Drop-in: Swim Member \$6; OP Resident \$7; Non-Resident \$8

HYDRORIDER WATER CYCLING

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

OCT 7 - NOV 13

NOV 18 - JAN 15 No Class 11/25, 11/27, 12/23, 12/25, 12/30, 1/1

WHEN: TUE / THU, 10:00am-10:40am 12 classes (6 weeks)

thru OCT 10

OCT 22 - DEC 3 No Class 11/26 & 11/28

DEC 17 - JAN 30 No Class 12/24 & 12/31

FEE: Swim Member \$90 (drop-in \$9); OP Resident \$95 (drop-in \$11); Non-Resident \$100 (drop-in \$13)

EARLYBIRD LAP SWIM

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

thru OCT 11

OCT 14 - NOV 22

NOV 25 - JAN 3 No Class 11/28, 12/24-12/25

FEE: Swim Member, free OP Resident \$65 (drop-in \$8); Non-Resident \$78 (drop-in \$8) **Pay lifeguard on duty.**

SHAPE UPS

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

thru OCT 10

OCT 22 - DEC 3 (Tue) No Class 11/28

DEC 10 - JAN 21 No Class 12/24

FEE: Swim Member \$40 (drop-in \$6); OP Resident \$50 (drop-in \$7); Non-Resident \$65 (drop-in \$8)

WET WORKS I: DEEP WATER

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

thru OCT 14

OCT 21 - NOV 29

DEC 9 - JAN 17 No Class 12/25

WET WORKS II: SHALLOW WATER

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

thru OCT 10

OCT 21 - DEC 3 (Tue) No Class 11/28

DEC 10 - JAN 16 No Class 12/24

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

CREAKY JOINTS I

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

thru OCT 14

OCT 21 - NOV 29

DEC 9 - JAN 17 No Class 12/25

CREAKY JOINTS II

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

thru OCT 10

OCT 21 - DEC 3 (Tue) No Class 11/28

DEC 10 - JAN 16 No Class 12/24

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

AQUA YOGA

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

thru OCT 11

OCT 23 - NOV 29

DEC 11 - JAN 22 No Class 12/25

FEE: Swim Member \$60 (drop-in \$6); OP Resident \$70 (drop-in \$7); Non-Resident \$86 (drop-in \$8)

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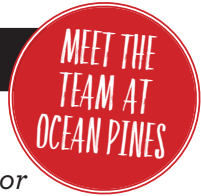
WHEN: MON & WED, 6:00pm-6:45pm

thru OCT 14

OCT 21 - NOV 27

DEC 9 - JAN 20 No Class 12/24

FEE: Swim Member \$40 (drop-in \$6); OP Resident \$47 (drop-in \$7); Non-Resident \$58 (drop-in \$8)



Meet the Team: Michelle Hitchens

Longtime aquatics teacher and lifeguard has successful first summer as director

When Michelle Hitchens became the Ocean Pines Aquatics Director in February, it was the latest step up the ladder for a woman who started working as a lifeguard at age 15.



Hitchens was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania. She moved to the Eastern Shore in 2004 and started working at a fitness center in nearby Bethany Beach.

“My mom grew up here and we have family nearby,” she said. “I started out in the fitness center at Sea Colony doing activities around the complex, and then I also lifeguarded on the side because they needed more guards.”

Hitchens occasionally worked other jobs out of the water, but something always seemed to pull her back in.

“I would take a little break, but then always go back to it,” she said. “Even in college, I worked at a YMCA and guarded and taught some lessons. For some reason, I always gravitated back to doing it.”

She came to Ocean Pines in 2012, again with family in the area, and right away started teaching swim lessons. From there, she became more and more active in aquatics programs and lessons, and she was the Aquatics Department manager prior to her promotion.

“The department has mostly been the same over the years – only little things have changed,” she said. “We’re constantly trying to improve classes and lessons, but I’ve always had my hand in lots of things. I organized exercise classes, I organized swim lessons, and I taught them, and I taught aquatics bike classes.

“I did all of that and helped to run certain things, so there wasn’t that much of a learning curve when it came to changing over to director, because I had been here for 12 years,” she added.

During and even after the pandemic, the Aquatics Department struggled to keep all five pools open during the summer because of a perpetual shortage of lifeguards. This summer, finally, things got back to normal.

“COVID didn’t help, but we didn’t have many guards in general. I feel like people just didn’t want to guard for some reason,” she said.

Hitchens went the usual route of attending job fairs, and

she was able to build on her connections as a longtime swim instructor. She also recruited some of her daughter’s friends from a local high school swim team.

“A lot of them took our lifeguarding classes this year, so that was a big benefit – having that big lifeguarding class,” she said. “We also had a strong

group of people returning that were very reliable, and they already knew how things ran. I’m hoping a lot of those people return again next year.”

During the summer, she also expanded offerings and hours at many of the pools, trying to give swim members and guests more value for their dollar.

“We do offer a lot of classes,” she said. “We also tried to do little things this summer, like keeping certain pools open later and giving people an opportunity to spend more time there. We opened the snack bar at the Swim and Racquet Club, and people really liked that. So, we’re hoping to do that again next year and to just keep improving things in small ways.”

Now, turning toward the fall and winter, Hitchens said she’s focused on creating a robust lineup of aquatics classes and programs geared toward all ages and skill levels. That includes daylong programs for grade-schoolers.

“We’ll have a junior lifeguard program that we didn’t have last winter, and we’ll schedule those on certain days when kids have off of school,” she said. “It’s always 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and it’s something for the parents to sign their kids up for where they don’t have to really worry about them for the whole day.”

Hitchens is also planning a Halloween swimming event, and more swim lessons to meet the high demand.

“We’re trying to get more instructors and finding ways to fit more classes in between other events happening in our pools,” she said.

All of that, and Hitchens balances being a mother of four. She said there’s slightly more flexibility running the Aquatics Department, rather than being the jack-of-all-trades holding it together.

“Two of my kids are older now and in high school, so it’s a little easier,” she said. “And with the younger two, my parents help me a little bit. But I’m trying to be more involved with



OCEAN PINES AQUATICS

their stuff after school this year.”

As for the future of Ocean Pines Aquatics, Hitchens said she just wants to keep building and improving the programming.

“We’re always trying to think of new things,” she said. “It’s a balance of seeing what people want and are willing to become involved in. We tried a few things over the summer, and we’ll hopefully continue to add new things that are a little bit different and eye-catching.”

Being a busy mother and working in pools since she was a teenager, Hitchens said, has certainly helped prepare her.

“Between having kids and doing lifeguarding and teaching, it comes pretty easy. And we’re always looking for things that are working elsewhere that we can incorporate,” she said. For residents and homeowners, Hitchens said there’s almost always something going on at the pools – and the first class is always free.

“People should come out and try the classes!” she said. “For anything without equipment, you can come and try the first class for free and see which classes you would like to keep up with.”

For more information on the Ocean Pines Aquatics Department, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/aquatics.

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Terry Underkoffler
Director of Racquet Sports

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For more info on our racquet sports, call 410-641-7728 or email tunderkoffler@oceanpines.org.



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Work on new Golf Course irrigation system begins

Disruption for golfers to be minimal; new system will be more efficient, longer lasting

Work started in early September on a multiyear irrigation improvement project at the Ocean Pines Golf Club that will effectively replace a failing 50-year-old system.

The new system is said to be longer lasting, and more efficient both in terms in coverage and water usage.

General Manager John Viola said the new irrigation system is just the latest example of Ocean Pines investing in its amenities.

Golf Course Superintendent Justin Hartshorne said the disruption for golfers will be minimal, with work scheduled around the shoulder season, and the 19th hole being utilized whenever one of the primary holes is unavailable.

He said the first phase of what will likely be a four-year project will include the pump station, the first and ninth holes, and the driving range.

Hartshorne said the project is getting an early start and will focus on perimeter areas so as not to be disruptive for golfers.

“We’re going to try to run the mainlines that are out in the rough areas and the perimeters of these holes, so it’s not going to be extremely disruptive to play,” he said. “When we shut down the pump station when we’re done watering for the season, we’ll be working more in the winter, and we’ll certainly have the 19th hole in play then.”

Hartshorne said the original system is around 53 years old. He said most irrigation systems have a lifespan of around 25 years.

“It’s well overdue,” he said. “We do a lot of maintenance on it every year, and we’ve actually been seeing pinhole leaks forming in the pipes – they’re literally just falling apart and deteriorating. So, we’re long overdue for a replacement and we’ve more than exceeded the lifespan of the current system.”

Hartshorne said golfers will see some work being done off to the sides, with pipes being fused aboveground and some trenching work being done in preparation.

“They’ll see some equipment, and some excavators on just a few holes,” he said. “Eventually, we’ll scrape up the sod, trench it out, put the pipe in the ground, and then they’ll backfill everything and tamp it down. It will be very clean when the whole process is done. This contractor has a lot of experience with these kinds of projects, so it should be limited disruption.”

For the average golfer, playing nine or 18 holes at the Ocean Pines Golf Club won’t be much different. What will be noticeable are the long-term benefits to the course.

“It’s a big investment, but it’s a huge part of the infrastructure and it’s my most vital maintenance tool for keeping a high quality of grass out here,” Hartshorne said. “It’s a very important system for keeping everything alive through the summer months.

“The irrigation systems are something you don’t see,” he continued. “It’s underground, so you walk right over it, but there’s miles and miles pipes and wires underground that help operate the system that you don’t notice on a daily basis.”

Hartshorne said the project will continue to run in phases, during the shoulder months, likely over the next four years. When it’s done, the Ocean Pines Golf Club will have a much more efficient system, with much better coverage over the whole course.

“We’re going to be able to really control where we’re putting the water out,” he said. “We’ll also probably reduce our water usage, because it’s going to run more efficiently, so it will help us save water as well as get water to some areas that we don’t have the ability to get to now. We’ll have wall-to-wall coverage across the golf course, so we’ll be able to maintain pretty much every bit of acreage that we have.

“It’s certainly going to help make the quality of the course even better,” he added.

What’s more, Hartshorne said the new system is said to be longer lasting and more durable.

“These pipes are certainly going to be able to hold up well beyond what our original system was built with,” he said.



OCEAN PINES GOLF CLUB

Hops Scramble nets more than \$2,600 for local charities

The Ocean Pines Golf Club on Aug. 23 played host to the annual Ernie Stiles Memorial Bavarian Hops Golf Scramble.

The 17th annual event paid homage to the late Ernie Stiles, who founded the event in the early 2000s as a fun fundraiser for local charities.

During the tournament, players teed off for a nine-hole experience.

Ed Kessler earned the coveted “hops hat” with his closest-to-the-pin shot of two feet, three inches on the seventh hole – he also made birdie.

Proceeds this year of \$1,336 went to Diakonia and a \$1,286 donation went to the Worcester County Humane Society. The tournament has raised more than \$35,000 for local charities since its inception.

Organizers Patty Curtin and Don McMullen thanked the golfers and in-kind donations from patrons that made the event possible.

“A special thank you to our friends at the seventh hole cheering us on, to John O'Connor and the bag drop personnel for their work, and Judie and Grayson for their work at the Clubhouse Grille in making our 17th annual event a success,” they said.

The Ernie Stiles Memorial Bavarian Hops Golf Scramble is sponsored by the Ocean Pines Golf Members Council.



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OPGMC announces 2024 scholarship recipients

The Ocean Pines Golf Members' Council in July announced \$15,000 in scholarships given to a dozen local high school students.

Scholarships were in part funded by the 40th annual Ocean Pines-Taylor Bank Golf Scramble, held at the Ocean Pines Golf Club on Wednesday, July 17. The annual tournament supports junior golf clinics and an annual tournament for junior golfers, and funds scholarships for local high school seniors who have shown an interest in golf.

During the last decade, the Golf Members' Council has raised almost \$88,000 for local scholarships. 2024 scholarship recipients:

Koda Bauer, Worcester Preparatory School, Awarded \$1,500: Koda Bauer played varsity golf at Worcester Prep for four years. In addition to golf, Bauer played piano throughout high school, performing in numerous concerts and recitals. Bauer maintained an A-grade point average at WPS, earning him membership in both the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. He also received the AP Scholar with Distinction as well as rural student recognition from the College Board. Bauer will attend the University of Maryland in College Park. He plans to major in political science with the aspiration of becoming a lawyer. He also plans on joining the college golf club team.

Adam Hafez, Worcester Preparatory School, Awarded \$600: Adam Hafez participated in golf, lacrosse, and tennis during his time at Worcester Prep. Hafez is both a National Honor Society member as well as a Spanish Honor Society member. While maintaining A's throughout high school, Hafez was a member of the school newspaper as well as the photography club. Hafez's interest in golf began four years ago through visits to local golf courses. He hopes to continue to participate in local golf competitions and recreational play. Since 2022, Hafez has worked as a track attendant at Baja Amusements. Adam will attend Salisbury University in the fall with hopes to major in marketing or business management.

Vanessa Hall, Worcester Preparatory School, Awarded \$2,800: Vanessa Hall participated in golf at Worcester Prep, where she lettered all four years. Hall served as team captain during her senior year and received the honor of All Conference Player once and earned many coach and conference awards. She also joined the golf Under Armor Junior Tour and qualified for nationals twice. Hall was a member of the WPS Robotics Team, Environmental Club, Volunteer Club, as well as the Mock Trial team. Graduating in the top 10% of her class, Hall received recognition such as the AP Scholar with Distinction, the College Board National and Rural Small Town Award, and was named a Ben Carson scholar. Hall also was a member of the Ocean City Volunteer Firefighter Company Cadet Program. She will attend Stanford University in the fall, where she plans to pursue a coterminal bachelor's and master's degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering with a minor in business. Hall also plans to join Stanford's golf club team.

\$1,000: Simran Jain played on the freshman and junior golf teams during her time at SDHS. Throughout high school, Jain participated in Mock Trial, the Science Olympiads, and on Academic Team. Jain will graduate in the top 5% of her class. She was recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar, AP Scholar with Distinction, Minds in Motion Scholar, and as a National Rural and Small Town Recognition Award by the College Board. Jain also served on as a member of numerous societies including the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Key Club, National English Honor Society. Though accepted to her top three colleges, Jain had not decided on a college as of April. She plans to major in management and environmental science. Jain's long-term goals include earning a master's degree and owning her own offshore wind energy company.

Daniel Karcheuski, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$1,300: Daniel Karcheuski began playing golf in 6th grade and has pursued it recreationally ever since. Throughout high school, Karcheuski participated on the swim team both for the high school and for Ocean Pines and was involved on the Academic Team, Math Team, and Concert Band. His senior year, Karcheuski was elected class treasurer by his classmates. Karcheuski earned recognition for his academic merit in the top 10% of his class as an AP Scholar with Distinction, College Board Rural and Small Town Recognition Scholar, and National Merit Commended Scholar. He was a member of the National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, Rho Kappa Honor Society, and served as the president of the Math Honor Society. Karcheuski may be familiar to Ocean Pines residents from his summer jobs as an assistant coach for the Ocean Pines Swim Team, a lifeguard for Ocean Pines Aquatics, or as a server at the Pines Public House & Eatery. Karcheuski will attend the University of Maryland - College Park, where he will major in government and politics. Karcheuski plans to go to law school and hopes after working as a licensed attorney to be appointed a judgeship.

Anthony "AJ" Kolb, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$500: AJ Kolb played on the varsity golf his first three years at SDHS and even went to states two out of three of those years. In addition to golf, Kolb played varsity baseball, varsity football, and varsity track at various times throughout high school. Kolb received recognition as a Minds in Motion Scholar for maintaining good grades while on all his varsity sports teams. Kolb was a member of the National Honor Society and Math Honor Society. While balancing club baseball teams as well as varsity high school sports, Kolb maintained a 4.0 GPA and will graduate in the top 10% of his class. Kolb committed to Towson University to play baseball, where he will pursue a degree in mathematics and business.

Evan Oglesby, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$3,000: Evan Oglesby played golf for SDHS all four years and served as team captain both his junior and senior year. Oglesby was named First Team All Bayside Player all four years and won

OCEAN PINES GOLF CLUB

Bayside South Conference Player of the Year in 2022. In his senior year, Oglesby was awarded the Sportsmanship Award. In addition to playing competitive golf and varsity golf at SDHS, Oglesby played varsity lacrosse for three years at SDHS. He also was a member of several honor societies, including National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, and the Social Studies Honor Society. Oglesby will graduate in the top 10% of his class and earned the Minds in Motion Scholar award six times for maintaining good grades while excelling in sports. Oglesby volunteered his time with OC Rec as a junior counselor and as a golf instructor. He also sold apparel and ran the scoreboard for SDHS wrestling team. For his commitment to community service, he was awarded the Presidential Service Award two times. Oglesby plans to attend Hood College, where he will major in biology. He plans to continue to play golf at the collegiate level. After college, Oglesby plans to attend medical school and become a dermatologist.

Carson Rayne, Worcester Preparatory School, Awarded \$1,300: Carson Rayne played golf for Worcester Prep beginning his freshman year. Throughout high school, Rayne also played on the tennis team and joined the basketball team his senior year. Rayne's presence on the honor roll earned him membership in the National Honor Society and recognition as an AP Scholar. For the last four years, Rayne also used his passion for agriculture to volunteer his time assessing crop damage for local farmers. Rayne also worked on his family farm and as a dishwasher for Sunset Grille since 2020. Rayne plans to keep his playing at local golf clubs with friends for years to come. Rayne plans on attending the University of Kentucky to earn a degree in agriculture. He hopes to work for John Deere or another agricultural company upon graduation. One day, he plans to return home to work on the family farm, Wayne Acres.

Wesley Simmons, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$800: Wesley Simmons's passion for golf started in middle school where he played on the golf team for three years. Since then, he has played recreationally with his dad and has been a member of the Ocean City Golf Course for three years. Though he's never won an award in golf, he says he received the surprise of his life when he once shot a hole in one in the OC golf course! Simmons's main hobbies include golf, surfing, and working on cars. He's won several awards at car shows including Clean Cab, Best in Show, and Best Interior. Simmons maintained a 4.0 weighted GPA while working part-time at Smokers BBQ since 2019 and at Paradise Water Sports since 2023. Simmons was a member of both the National Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society. Simmons will attend Wor-Wic Community College, where he will major in cyber security. His dream is to work for the National Security Agency.

Hunter Simon, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$900: Hunter Simon played on the junior varsity golf team in high school for three years. Throughout high school, Simon attended the Ocean Pines golf camp and fostered his love for golf in recreational play with friends. Throughout high school, Simon volunteered within the community with the Ocean Pines Basketball League, the Delmarva Bike Week, and at the Worcester County Public Library at the Ocean Pines branch location. Simon plans to earn his associate's degree at Wor-Wic Community College in sports journalism and broadcasting before transferring to the University of Maryland's Merrill School of Journalism. Throughout high school, he worked as a student announcer at football games and for Delmarva Shorebirds baseball team in the press box which fostered his early passion for sports journalism.

Foster Smith, Stephen Decatur High School, Awarded \$700: Foster Smith played on the SDHS golf team his freshman and sophomore years and continues to play recreationally. Smith also played varsity baseball all four years and managed the wrestling team for one year. While balancing school, a part-time job, and playing baseball for SDHS and the local Delmarva Aces, Smith served an impressive average of over 100 hours of community service annually to our community. He was recognized for his outstanding community service with the Presidential Service Award for three consecutive years. Smith also participated in the Key Club for three years and was a member of the National Honor Society for his senior year. Throughout high school, Smith received three Minds in Motion Scholar awards, one Media Expo win in 2023, and was a WeXL honoree three times. Smith will attend Salisbury University, where he will major in business. He hopes to one day pursue a career where he can help improve affordable housing opportunities for families.

Claire Windrow, Worcester Preparatory School, Awarded \$600: Claire Windrow's love for golf began a year ago. Windrow enjoys spending time at local golf courses on the weekends and plans on pursuing the hobby in the years to come. Throughout her time at WPS, Windrow played both varsity soccer and varsity lacrosse. Her 3.87 GPA awarded her membership in both the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society and recognition as an AP Scholar with Distinction. Windrow balanced multiple jobs and volunteer positions alongside with her athletic pursuits. She was also elected student body president her senior year and served as editor-in-chief of the yearbook. After graduation, Windrow will pursue a degree in biology at the University of Georgia. She plans to pursue a career in medicine.

For more information about the committee or how to apply for future scholarships, contact OPGMC Scholarship Committee Chairperson Dave McGregor at david.b.mcgregor@gmail.com.



Longtime Ocean Pines resident has jersey retired at Navy football game

'Reif' earned Maxwell Award in 1957, was inducted into College Football Hall of Fame in 1997

Bob “Reif” Reifsnnyder, an Ocean Pines resident for more than 30 years, was once the top college football player in the country, winning the Maxwell Award in 1957 for the Navy Midshipmen.

Reifsnnyder had his jersey number, 58, retired during halftime ceremonies on Saturday, Aug. 31 at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis.

“It’s a great honor and they only do it for a few people,” he said. “But the big thing is, I’ve always looked upon those type of things as honoring your team, because if you weren’t on a good team with good players, you wouldn’t go and get that kind of recognition.”

Navy would only lose two games from 1956 to 1957 during Reifsnnyder’s heyday, and the team finished ranked #5 in the country in 1957.

“We worked hard, and we also had great coaching,” he said. “It was a good couple of years that I had there.”

During halftime, Reifsnnyder stepped back onto the field for what he said was a surreal and humbling experience.

“My wife’s sister said, ‘What was it like speaking in front of 30,000 people?’ Well, it was a lot easier than playing in front of them!” he said with a laugh.

During his playing days, the crowd would chant, “Reif! Reif!” when he was on the field. As his jersey was being retired, Reifsnnyder said he could hear some of his former classmates doing that familiar chant from the stands.

“It was just a great feeling, and it brought back a lot of great memories,” he said. Reifsnnyder stuck around for the game, as the Navy Midshipmen went on to win 49-21 over the visiting Bucknell Bisons.

Reifsnnyder said he still enjoys attending Navy games on a regular basis.

“It’s one of the benefits of living over here in Ocean Pines – we’re only a couple hours away,” he said. “I watch some of the spring practices, and every once in a while a full game. And, of course, I got season tickets. I’ve never lost touch with people there.

“Going to school, you make a lot of good friends, and not just football players, but your classmates,” he continued. “It wasn’t the easiest thing in the world, but it was a great experience going to the Naval Academy, and



obviously the accomplishments we’ve had in football just made it even better.”

Reifsnnyder ruptured his Achilles tendon during the preseason of his senior year and did not play. He graduated from the Naval Academy, but a medical discharge prevented him from serving.

“In today’s world I don’t think that would have happened, and it really disappointed me, because I was looking forward to a career in the Navy,” he said. “I went there with the idea of being a pilot, and then I guess between my size and my eyes that got ruled out. But I was thinking of going into the Marine Corps, and then this leg issue happened, and that was it.”

Despite not playing his senior year, Reifsnnyder was drafted into the NFL by the Los Angeles Rams. However, he never played for the team because of his injury.

“They didn’t have MRIs in those days, so I got hurt in August and they didn’t operate on me until March, and you

can imagine what happened in the meantime,” he said.

The Rams later traded Reifsnnyder to the New York Giants, where he remained on injured reserve.

“The next year, the AFL opened up, so I took a jump and I went over there. But I just couldn’t compete anymore,” he said. “You have to be 100% to play in pro football, and I never was.”

Instead of playing football, Reifsnnyder would go on to have a long career as a schoolteacher and administrator – and as a coach.

“I was a dean of students in charge of discipline at two big high schools on Long Island, and the head football coach,” he said. “And in between those two high schools, I coached for

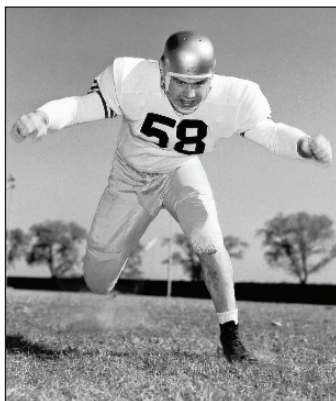
six years at Columbia University.”

Reifsnnyder and his wife, Sandy, ended up in Ocean Pines because his sister-in-law owned property there and introduced them to the area.

“We love what Ocean Pines has. It has everything,” he said.

Reifsnnyder is an avid golfer, and he also owned a boat when they first moved to the community, and they became regulars at the marina.

“It was close to Navy, and also my kids are up in New York, so it was close to them,” he



COMMUNITY STORIES

said. “We’ve had a great life, and we’ve have made a lot of good friends here. We have a great golf course with great people play with. I’ve been here 30 years now and enjoyed every minute of it. My wife and I love it here.”

Reifsnnyder was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1997. His official College Football bio reads:

“Bob Reifsnnyder stood 6-1 in height, weighed 230 pounds, and played tackle for Navy. In 1957, his junior year, Navy went 8-1-1, won the Lambert Trophy as the best team in the East and beat Rice in the Cotton Bowl. Reifsnnyder was named a first-team All-America and won the Maxwell Trophy, given to the nation’s best player. This was the first time the Maxwell Award was given to a guard or tackle. Reifsnnyder suffered a knee injury before the 1958 season began, and his playing time was limited to 27 minutes of the entire schedule. He graduated from Navy as a member of the 1959 class but did not receive a commission because of his physical disability. He had a brief professional football career (New York Giants 1959, New York Titans 1960-61). Reifsnnyder coached football at Berner High School, Massapequa, New York, from 1963-1980, with a career record of 104-39-3. For the period 1981-84 he was an assistant coach at Columbia University. For the years 1985-86 he was football coach at Friends Academy. In 1987 he became coach at Patchogue-Medford High School in New York. He added the title of Dean of Students at the school in 1990.”

2025 PUP OF THE PINES Photo Contest

2024 Winner Huckleberry!



“My name is Huckleberry. I am a Golden Retriever and am the 2024 ‘Pup of the Pines!’

I enjoy all of the amenities that Ocean Pines has to offer, from scenic walks on the trails, fetch in the park, to the finest of yappy hours at the Yacht Club.”

Check out my Instagram: itsagoldenpawty

As ‘Pup of the Pines’, Huckleberry receives a free 2024 Ocean Pines Dog Park registration. He is also the official face of the dog park for 2024 and will be featured in the Ocean Pines Activity Guide and other postings throughout the year.

Entry begins Sept. 1 to Oct. 26

Applications must be submitted by Oct. 24

Ocean Pines pet parents can enter their pup(s) for a \$5/dog entry fee.

Official entry forms will be available at the Community Center. The top 8 pups will be on display at the Ocean Pines Halloween Fall Festival Oct 26. Attendees at the event will be able to vote for their favorite.

The winner will be announced at the Hometown Christmas Tree Lighting November 30.

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Ocean Pines volunteers help grant ‘Twilight Wish’

Two Ocean Pines women, Carolyn Dryzga and Barb Peletier, made the dreams of two local seniors come true on Aug. 28, thanks to the Twilight Wish Foundation.

Lester Mason, 80, and Chauncey Corbin, 70, have each been clients and residents of the Worcester County Developmental Center for several decades. The center, in Newark, Maryland, has helped local people with intellectual disabilities find meaningful employment, gain independence, and increase their self-worth since 1973.

Mason, WCDC a resident for more than 30 years, can often be seen carrying a picture book of his favorite cars. Corbin, a resident at the center since 1999, also loves cars, but was never able to get his driver’s license because of an intellectual disability.

Both enjoy the Cruisin’ Ocean City event where they can interact with classic cars, especially the hot rods.

Worcester County Twilight Wish Foundation Chapter Director Dryzga and volunteer Peletier introduced Mason and Corbin to Ocean City Cruzers Club President Ronnie Young – and his 1929 Ford Roadster.

Mason took a 10-minute ride in the classic hot rod and posed for pictures next to it. Corbin was a little shy, but still enjoyed touching the car and meeting Young.

Several clients posed for pictures with the car, and Mason and Corbin each received t-shirts, and certificates that read: *“For Maintaining an Inspiring and Uplifting Spirit and Dedication to Others Know that others remember and care.”*

The Roadster itself has quite the history, built by Young and his father and brother more than 70 years ago.

“It was built from scratch,” Young said. “My brother bought it in 1953, and when he went in the Marines my dad started on it with me, and it eventually moved on to me and I’ve kept it ever since,” he said.

Young said building the car was a labor of love, and seeing it bring joy to others so many years later is deeply gratifying.

“It’s terrific. I’m glad I could do this for somebody,” he said. “I’m really glad I could help somebody out and help them make a wish come true.”

Dryzga started the Worcester County chapter of the Twilight

Foundation in March. The chapter worked with WCDC to grant a client’s wish to meet Minnie Mouse in July, and in August helped a 95-year-old veteran dine at Harrison’s Harbor Watch and watch boats from the White Marlin Open come in.

Peletier, a prolific local volunteer who was given the Sam Wilkinson Volunteer Award from Ocean Pines earlier this month, said she was eager to help this new cause.

“Carolyn told me about it, and I said, ‘I’m in!’” she said. “It’s been great so far. Everyone we approach has been so generous with their time.”

Both were familiar with WCDC because of their prior volunteer experience.

“We’ve been going to nursing homes and visiting the Developmental Center, and just asked people to keep their ears open if they had anyone with a wish,” Peletier said.

“We both feel that, if we can make somebody happy, it’s a wonderful thing that we’ve discovered, and it’s great that we can share this together,” Dryzga said.

Dryzga said the Worcester Twilight Wish chapter is currently a two-person operation, but they will start to seek additional volunteers next year.

The Twilight Wish Foundation is a national nonprofit “whose mission is to honor and enrich the lives of seniors through intergenerational wish granting celebrations.” Since 2003, the nonprofit has granted more than 6,100 wishes throughout the United States.

For more information on local opportunities through the Twilight Wish Foundation, contact Carolyn Dryzga at twfworcoa@gmail.com or call 302-889-0040 or 215-519-3670.

For more info on the organization, visit www.twilightwish.org.





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13th Annual Holiday Craft Fair, Nov. 2

The Pine'eer Craft Club will host the 13th Annual Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, Nov. 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ocean Pines Community Center.

The event is free and open to the public and will feature local artisans, crafters, and many members of the Pine'eer Craft Club displaying and selling their handmade creations.

As a juried craft show, the event limits the number of like items to ensure a variety of one-of-a-kind pieces. Shoppers can expect to find a range of holiday-themed items, including jewelry, pottery, paintings, wreaths, pet products, American Girl doll clothes, stained glass, cross-stitched goods, home decor, and much more.

"We encourage everyone to come early, as many of the most popular items sell out quickly," event co-chair Debbie Jiwa said. "Our bake sale, which is a favorite among attendees, is usually sold out by noon."

In addition to the craft offerings, shoppers will have the opportunity to purchase unusual, one-of-a-kind items such as fabric-decorated plates, quilted items, and gourd ornaments. The Kiwanis Club will also be in the Community Center's Marlin Room, offering breakfast and lunch items for purchase.

Proceeds from the Holiday Craft Fair will benefit the Ocean Pines community. The Pine'eer Craft Club, which is

celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, has donated more than \$177,000 to various local organizations, including the Ocean Pines Police and Fire departments, Ocean Pines Recreation and Parks, and the Worcester County Veterans Memorial Foundation.

For more information about the Holiday Craft Fair, contact Jiwa at djjb7855@yahoo.com.

About the Pine'eer Craft Club: Founded in 1974, the Pine'eer Craft Club supports local artisans and the Ocean Pines community through craft shows, sales, and donations. The club has been active for 50 years and remains dedicated to fostering creativity while giving back to the community.

For more information, visit www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/artisan-gift-shop.





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