



Happy Holidays!
from Worcester County Tourism



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Aquarium to make splash

Gift allows Delmarva Discovery Center to add aquarium

[STORY BY BILL KERBIN]

A new deepwater aquarium exhibit will open in the spring at Delmarva Discovery Center, thanks to a \$250,000 contribution from the Fulton Owen Foundation. The 8,000-gallon tank will feature native species found in the Pocomoke River—and will be the largest display of its type south of Wilmington, according to Director Brian Garrett.

The aquarium had been in the original plans for the center, but was delayed due to funding difficulties. The foundation's support clears the way for the exhibit now, said President Barbara Tull.

The featured fish will be the Atlantic sturgeon, a unique species that came up the Pocomoke River in large schools to spawn and was commercially fished in the river in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Today, it's almost to the point of being placed on the endangered list.

A.W. Owen of the Fulton Owen Foundation said the contribution was made to honor his wife Jennie's mother and late father, Martha and Charles Fulton. Mr. Owen cited their interest in education throughout many years with contributions to Salisbury University, the Snow Hill Christian Nursery School, and the Lower Shore Family YMCA. Mr. Fulton also served on the SU Foundation for many years.

A member of the Worcester County Board of Education for years, Mr. Fulton served on the board when the county's middle schools were constructed. The middle schools were a new concept in education at that time.

"Chuck never wanted any credit (for his contributions and activities)," Mr. Owen said. "He loved the Shore and he loved the bay." Added Jennie Owen, "We feel honored that we can do this." 

A weekend strictly for the birds

40+ trips planned for Delmarva Birding Weekend

[STORY BY JIM RAPP, DIRECTOR, DELMARVA LOW IMPACT TOURISM EXPERIENCES, INC. (DLITE)]

The Delmarva Birding Weekend celebrates the spring migration of thousands of warblers, shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors. The weekend combines boat trips, paddling treks, and expeditions by foot, and will take place April 22–26, 2009.

Worcester County hosts several Birding Weekend field trips. The county possesses an extensive variety of environments, including barrier islands, tidal wetlands, cypress swamps, upland fields, and primeval forests. Field trips take place on the land and in the waters that feed into the Chesapeake and Maryland's coastal bays.

More than 400 bird species have been recorded in the Delmarva region. During the 2008 event, 190 species were tallied!

Participating birders will be helping birds by promoting bird and habitat conservation. Birders, both novice and experienced, can make an important statement about the economic value of birds and their habitats through low-impact tourism. The Delmarva Birding Weekend generates more than \$100,000 in direct local spending with our outfitters, hotels, restaurants,



Birders might glimpse a Least Tern during the Delmarva Birding Weekend in April. [PHOTO BY NICO SARBANES]

and retail outlets. Birders are encouraged to remind local businesses that they are here to enjoy Delmarva's natural areas and the birds that inhabit them.

More than 40 field trips take place during the Delmarva Birding Weekend. New trips have been added for the 2009 event. If your business or organization would like to support this low-impact tourism program, sponsorship packages are available.

For more information, contact Jim Rapp at dlitedirector@comcast.net or 443.614.0261. For Delmarva Birding Weekend trip availability, go to www.delmarvabirdingweekend.org.

AT A GLANCE

Delmarva Birding Weekend

What:

Enjoy spring migration with more than 40 birding trips

around Delmarva.

When: April 22–26, 2009

More: For details, go to www.delmarvabirdingweekend.org



Director of Worcester County Tourism Lisa Challenger (right) accepts a statewide "Best Electronic Marketing Award" for the Wilds of Worcester webisodes. Also receiving an award is Ann Hillyer (left) of maryland.com.

Wilds of Worcester wins award

The Wilds of Worcester webisodes recently won a statewide award from the Maryland Tourism Council for "Best Electronic Marketing Award." The award recognizes new technologies that enhance our ability to attract visitors. This award is given to the most strategic, innovative, and successful electronic marketing initiative to attract visitors. Check out the webisodes at www.WildsofWorcester.com.



A new one-page flier promotes Pocomoke City.

Pocomoke City gets marketing boost

In an effort to coordinate efforts among attractions in Pocomoke City, Lisa Challenger and Michael Day developed a one-page color flier touting the reasons Pocomoke is a perfect daytrip destination. Participating attractions include the Marva Theater, the Delmarva Discovery Center, Sturgis One-Room School, the Costen House, and the Bay Queen river cruise boat. All attractions have offered discounted rates for group tours. The first group was hosted earlier this fall. The color fliers have been distributed to group tour sales personnel in Ocean City and with the state tourism office.

Give this foal a good name!

The perfect gift for someone who has everything—naming rights for a wild Assateague pony

On Black Friday, November 28, Assateague Island Alliance (AIA) launched a Naming Rights auction on eBay for four lucky foals. These will be the first auctions for Naming Rights for a wild "Assateague Horse."

"This is a chance for someone to give a unique living gift."

David Blazer, AIA President

Most people can't afford to name a stadium, or memorialize an incident, but now the average American can provide a lasting tribute and memorial to a loved one by naming a foal that will be added to our new Foster Horse Program that begins in mid-January.

These fund-raising initiatives on the internet will provide a creative pathway for AIA to

educate people who have not yet visited the Island, and will allow old friends to stay in touch with the fauna, flora, and especially the Assateague ponies. The AIA looks forward to seeing you online at eBay to bid on naming rights for one of four 2008 Assateague Island foals. There will be four consecutive 10-day auctions just in time for the holidays so your pony's name can be added to the genealogical list of equine ancestry.

"We're trying something new," said David Blazer, AIA president. "Assateague Island National Seashore is one of the few wild barrier island ecosystems that is still accessible in its wild state. There is an ongoing horse management contraceptive program to control the population for the horses so they don't eat themselves out of a home. We don't know when we'll have additional foals, so this is a real happy event and a chance for someone to give a unique living gift."

The Assateague Island Alliance, a 501-c3 organization, is dedicated to ensuring that the pristine island park has additional resources to support educational programs, and assure stewardship of resources while encouraging high quality resource-compatible recreation activities. Donations and purchases are tax-deductible. For details, contact Jeanne Lynch at 410.208.1118 or assateagueislandalliance@gmail.com.



The Assateague Island Alliance is auctioning off naming rights to four foals on eBay. Donations help the AIA support the island park. [PHOTO BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE]

MAIN STREET CORNER

Berlin Main Street Program takes shape

[STORY BY MICHAEL DAY]

This summer, Berlin became one of the newest Maryland Main Street communities. Terri Sexton, owner of the Treasure Chest on Main Street in Berlin, was named chairman of the Berlin Main Street Program. She has assembled Main Street's five committees and has begun meetings with 26 volunteers representing a cross section of the community. The Main Street Program committees work in the following areas:

Organization involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources. A governing board and standing committees make up the organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid director.

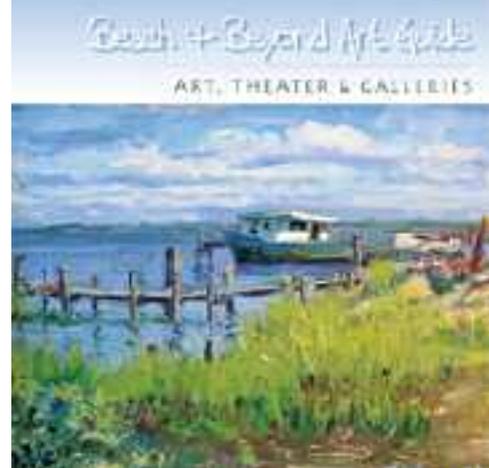
Promotion sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play, and invest in the Main Street district. A promotional strategy that markets the district's unique characteristics can forge a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets—such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets—is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere can be created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices, rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

Economic Restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.

Clean, Safe, and Green has three major goals: (1) to present a clean and well-maintained commercial district through simple and sustainable practices, including clean-up days and recycling. (2) To create a safe neighborhood and enhance the perception of safety through environmental and community resources. (3) To augment the commercial district streetscape with beautification projects and practices in accordance with Smart Growth and green initiatives.

For more information, contact Terri Sexton at 410.641.0333 or Michael Day, Berlin/Pocomoke Main Street Coordinator at 443.735.0957. 



County art guide to be rolled out in 2009

Featuring a compilation of artists, galleries, theater, and artful dining in Worcester County, *The Beach & Beyond Art and Gallery Guide* will be completed in 2009. Worcester has 14 art galleries, and nearly 40 artists have been selected to appear in the guide. The theater section will include the Marva Theater in Pocomoke City, the Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center at UMES, and the Fulton Black Box Theater at SU. The guide is intended to support artists, arts organizations, small business/gallery owners, and theatrical performances. It will be used as an economic development tool to elevate the arts as a viable career and business. The guide will be available at art galleries and at the tourism office.

New Delmarva Nature & Heritage Institute offering courses in 2009

[STORY BY JIM RAPP, DIRECTOR, DELMARVA LOW IMPACT TOURISM EXPERIENCES, INC. (DLITE)]

Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences (DLITE) and partner organizations are teaming up with Wor-Wic Community College to teach three new courses for interpreters and guides in our local parks, museums, and heritage sites as part of the newly developed "Delmarva Nature & Heritage Institute."

More than \$43,000 in federal, state, and local grant funding has been obtained to develop curriculum, compensate instructors, and pay local sites to host courses. All classes are taught in the field by local nature and heritage scholars at sites such as Assateague Island, Furnace Town, and the Delmarva Discovery Center. The first three classes are:

"Interpreting Nature and Heritage Sites for Visitors" will be taught in March 2009. The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority has provided funding.

"Nature and Heritage of the Pocomoke River" will be offered in April/May 2009. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network has provided funding, thanks to a grant submitted through the Town of Snow Hill's Sturgis Memorial Gateway.

"Nature and Heritage of Maryland's Coastal Bays," will be offered in June 2009. Funding comes from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program and the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore.

Each 12- to 20-hour course will include interpretation theory, program development, Native American history, African-American history, colonial history, natural history, industry, folklore, and stewardship. The courses will improve the interpretation programs of local museums, parks, and heritage sites, as well as stewardship organizations and tourism professionals. Fifty students will be taught during each of the three courses. The 150 trained interpreters will be asked to train other partner staff and volunteers using the "train the trainer" model.

The courses will help interpreters tell wonderful stories about the nature and heritage of Worcester County and the Delmarva region and provide students with a sense of place and purpose for stewardship. Interpreters will learn to help visitors discover the beauty and rich history of our region in a responsible, sustainable manner. Ultimately, these courses will improve the nature and heritage-based tourism economy of our region, as more low-impact travelers spend time—and money—exploring Delmarva.

Course cost, dates, and locations will be determined by Delmarva Nature & Heritage Institute partners in the coming months. For more information, or to register for a course, contact DLITE Director Jim Rapp at 443.614.0261 or dlitedirector@comcast.net.

IN THE NEWS



Berlin and Ocean City were featured prominently in an article in the December issue of *Coastal Living*. The story highlighted the great Christmas activities marking the season.

The *Delmarva Quarterly*, winter edition, featured two stories about the **Pocomoke River and Delmarva's Iron Age**. One story explored the development of iron production at Furnace Town and the interpretation of the river on exhibit at the Delmarva Discovery Center. The second feature story was about the Pocomoke River State Park and its vibrant ecology.

CALENDAR

JANUARY 2009

- Jan. 1 AGH Penguin Swim. Princess Royale, 91st St. & Ocean. A cool dip in the Atlantic raises money for Atlantic General Hospital. 1pm. 410.641.9858. www.atlanticgeneral.org.
- Jan. 17-18 Nautical & Wildlife Art Festival, Convention Center, OC. Nationally acclaimed painters, sculptors, artists. Sat, 10am-5pm; Sun, 10am-4pm. 410.524.9177.
- Jan. 23-25 35th Annual East Coast Commercial Fisherman's & Aquaculture Trade Expo, Convention Center, OC. See the latest engines, boats, equipment and more. Fri, 11am-6pm; Sat, 10am-6pm; Sun, 10am-4:30pm. 800.421.9176.

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 13-15 Seaside Boat Show, Convention Center, OC. Fishing boats, sailboats, kayaks, accessories, financing options, and more. Fri, 11am-7pm; Sat, 10am-7pm; Sun, 11am-5pm. 410.632.3676. www.ocboatshow.com.
- Feb. 15 Mid-Atlantic Symphony Concert, Community Church at Ocean Pines. "Echoes of Love," vocal and instrumental pieces from the Middle Ages to today. 3pm. 888.846.8600. www.midatlantic-symphony.org.

MARCH

- March 14 Handbell Ringers Concert, Convention Center, OC. With 500 ringers. 4:30pm. 302.677.0187. www.areaiii.org.
- March 14 St. Patrick's Day Parade, OC. Route is 60th Street south to 45th Street. Noon. 410.289.6156.

OC Art Summit leads to action plan

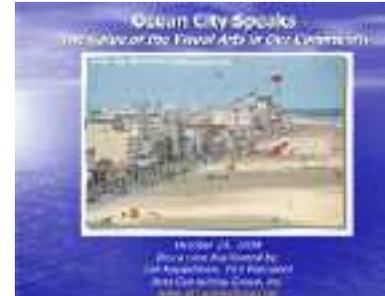
On October 29 the Art League of Ocean City convened the first Ocean City Art Summit. Representatives from city, county, and state governments, along with business people, organizations, residential communities, art-related groups, and those with a concern for the arts exchanged thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities of the future of the visual arts in Ocean City.

The results of the summit are set forth in *Ocean City Speaks: The Value of the Visual Arts in Our Community*.

Included in the report is a framework for understanding how the visual arts can become an integral part of our community.

The report lays out a potential action plan that can be used to move forward with the desire to incorporate the visual arts into the very fabric of Ocean City. Some of the initiatives can be acted on immediately. In fact, the Art League is taking steps to incorporate them into its operations. Some initiatives are longer term and will take a coordinated effort to achieve. The Art League has pledged to work with all who attended and the community-at-large to enhance the visual arts in Ocean City and make the dream of a visual arts center a reality.

To view the summit report, go to the ALOC website at www.artleagueofoceancity.org and click on "Forms." Questions? Call the ALOC at 410.524.9433. 



SAND PAPERS

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