

JANUARY 2021

HOSPITALITY HOTLINE

Official Newsletter of the Ocean City
Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association



Member Message

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUSAN L. JONES

As we slide into 2021, let's remember that with each new year we have an opportunity for a new perspective and a new view. Living in Worcester County allows us to gaze at the amazing ocean at any time and I know for me, it always provides a sense of peace. These last few months have also taught me the value of our Association and of fostering relationships amongst our members. These times have provided the clarity I needed to continue to forge forward and advocate for our membership. The advocacy efforts of the National Restaurant Association, the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the US Travel Association are unparalleled and we will continue to align with their efforts for recovery. Fifty years ago, in 1971, several Ocean City hospitality owners were determined to keep hospitality front and center and with advocacy as the root of OCHMRA's existence, some things may never change; we'll just always be able to refresh our view! 😊



US Travel has consistently provided updates and forecasts amidst the last several months to help guide the travel industry. Check out "Assessing Recovery: Looking Ahead to 2021"
US Travel Forecast:

[***click here: Forecast Link***](#)

Congress Passes Relief Package - for the highlights,
click below:

[***US Travel Recap***](#)

SOJERN Traveler Trends

Check out the 10 traveler trends to keep at the forefront of 2021 advertising.
[click - Trend Link](#)

Hotels - Webinar link for driving bookings:
[click webinar](#)





Business Brief

2021 Workforce: Rather than having standing committees, the OCHMRA forms task forces from time to time as needed. Given our extreme concern with the staffing situation for next season, we have formed an Employee Task Force to develop solutions.

Annemarie Dickerson, former owner of the Francis Scott Key Resort, is leading the task force. The group has discussed creating a connection with the south end of Worcester County where a large population of potential workers live, with the jobs here in the north end of the county. Transportation and housing have historically been barriers to this idea, so grants and all options are now being discussed. Additionally, housing at local universities has been explored and discussion is forthcoming with education to request working be accepted as volunteer hour graduation requirements.

The J1 Summer Work Travel program also continues to move forward for 2021. Local sponsor organizations, such as ASPIRE and United Work & Travel, have reported recruiting, interviewing and arranging employment for next season.

If you have any thoughts you'd like to share or solutions to help the Employee Task Force, feel free to reach out! Annemarie's email is amdinoc@aol.com or SusanJones@ocvisitor.com.

MD Minimum Wage

On January 1, minimum wage (except for Montgomery County) will increase to \$11.75/hour (for employers with 15 or more employees) and \$11.60/hour (for employers with 14 or fewer employees).

**** The minimum "Tip Wage" in Maryland (except for Montgomery) remains at \$3.63 per hour for tipped employees. If tipped employees do not make enough in employer-required tip wages plus tips to earn at least the full applicable minimum wage per hour for the workweek, the employer must make up the difference.*

The following exemptions remain in effect for State/local minimum wage laws:

Establishments selling food and drink for on-premise consumption grossing less than \$400,000 annually are exempt from State and local minimum wage requirements. However, these businesses must still comply with federal minimum wage (currently \$7.25/hour) and overtime law. Employees under age 16 working less than 20 hours per week are exempt from State and local minimum wage requirements (federal minimum wage law applies).

Required Postings: The Department of Labor (MDL) continues to make revisions/updates to the required labor law posters. You should periodically make sure your business is using the latest version.

Allowable Tip Credits/Overtime Tip Credit Rates compliance information for allowable tip credits and related overtime rates can be found at this link: http://www.dllr.state.md.us/forms/essti_pallowinfo.pdf

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Hospitality Highlights

WARM WELCOMES & SAD GOODBYES

Congratulations to **Lori Lutz** who has become the Assistant General Manager at the **Hotels at Fager's Island**.

The **Hilton Oceanfront Suites** has promoted **Charlie Lyon** to the position of Food & Beverage Director.

Best wishes to **Kim Gillis** who after 21 years at **Becker Morgan Group** is taking a step back to spend more time with the family.

Congratulations to **Liz Fitzsimmons, MD Office of Tourism** as she was named to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board by U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The board serves the U.S. Secretary of Commerce on policies and programs relating to the travel and tourism industry, offers counsel on current and emerging issues, and provides a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to industry-related problems.

Condolences to **JD Quillin** (formerly of the Surf & Sands, Satellite & French Quarter motels) and his family on the loss of Sandy Quillin. Also to **Mitch Parker** (formerly of Frontier Town) on the loss of his cousin Gene Parker. Finally, condolences to The Dispatch's **Bethany Hooper** on the loss of her father Ken Hooper.



OCHMRA TRADE EXPO UPDATE

Upon conducting and reviewing exhibitor and attendee surveys and holding countless hours of discussion, the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association Board of Directors has concluded that it would be impossible to host an in-person Expo this March. Rather than cancel altogether, the Association realizes the importance of continuing to unite the hospitality industry and will launch the 47th Annual Spring Trade Expo in a slightly different format. The Association has partnered with OC Today to produce EXPO Marketplace, an online catalog featuring show specials, new products and relative content. In addition, educational sessions and Facebook Live Power Panels featuring leaders and influencers are currently being planned. We believe this is the right direction and we appreciate the loyal support of the exhibitors, attendees, and our partners. In the coming weeks, more details will continue to be shared. The annual tradeshow has been a mainstay in Ocean City and has been bringing together hospitality buyers and sellers since 1974. Additionally, it is a main revenue source for our non-profit Association, so all support is welcomed and appreciated!

Mark your calendar for Monday, March 8th for the Facebook Live Power Panels and sign up for email updates on the [Stay in the Loop link](#)

OCHMRA TURNS 50!

Founded as a non-profit in 1971, the OCHMRA will celebrate 50 years of advocacy in 2021! A celebration is being planned and will most likely be in November as we definitely want to wait until we can have a huge gathering - this is a momentous occasion!

OUTDOOR DINING

We are continuing to monitor impacts on next season. In a recent conversation with OC Planning and Zoning, we learned they are submitting to Mayor & Council a renewal plan which would extend this past seasons approvals. Any new outdoor dining plans would have to be submitted for future approval. This is TENTATIVE - awaiting Mayor and Council discussion. We'll continue to keep you up to date!



Judges Rule Against RAM in Lawsuits

We are unhappy to report that the judges in Baltimore City, Prince George's County and Montgomery County each ruled to deny RAM's request for temporary restraining orders that would have allowed for indoor and outdoor dining to resume in their jurisdictions. Hearing were held in all three jurisdictions yesterday.

Each judge acknowledged that our industry has experienced irreparable harm. Nearly a dozen restaurant owners provided affidavits or testified in person to this and each judge felt that we made that part of the case. However, where we fell short boiled down to two things – the local governments have the authority to make this decision and based on the law their decision to close dining was not arbitrary or irrational. Even though we do not agree with the rationale being used to close dining, the judges deferred to the county officials and their experts.

There is a court hearing in Anne Arundel County on December 28 on this same matter, so hopefully there will be a better result. RAM will be testifying on behalf of the industry at this hearing as well. After the judge's ruling in AA County is known, RAM will convene restaurants in each jurisdiction to review possible next steps and actions.

Please note that the RAM Office is closed starting today and will reopen January 4th. Most employees will not be working, or not working consistently, during this Holiday break. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Although very different and stressful this year, we hope that everyone has a Wonderful and Safe Holiday.

Marshall Weston
President & CEO
Restaurant Association of Maryland

Winter Wellness in OCMD

Events & Classes at the Art League of Ocean City



Hope & Healing

"Hope and Healing" Art Exhibition

January 17th - February 27th

This exhibition will showcase artwork to lift the spirits with joy and positivity. Available to view in the gallery and online.



Online Class: Relaxing Zentangle Drawings with Ryan Vai

January 5th from 12-1:30pm. February 2nd from 12-1:30pm

Cost: \$20 Members, \$25 Non-Members. Cost per session.

Let's unwind and explore the infinite realms of elemental design!



In-Person Class: Art 4 Living Well w/ Kelli Anders & Abbi Curtis

January 17th from 12:30-3:30pm

Cost: Adults Members \$65, Non-Members \$80

A collaboration of yoga and art. No experience necessary.



Online Class: Journaling with Barbara Buford

January 19th from 12:30-2:30pm. February 16th from 12:30-2:30pm

Cost: \$25 Members, \$30 Non-Members. Cost per session.

Learn the why and how to's of working in an art journal.



Online Class: Abstract Mini Collages with Barbara Buford

January 26th from 12:30-2:30pm

Cost: \$30 Members, \$38 Non-Members

Learn how to create four mini collages using things that inspire you.



In-Person Class: HeART and Soul with Barbara Buford

January 28th from 5:30-7:30pm. February 25th from 5:30-7:30pm.

Cost: FREE!

Projects are designed to focus on centering and healing through art.



Online Class: Tiny Collages with Barbara Buford

February 2nd from 12:30-2:30pm

Cost: \$30 Members, \$38 Non-Members

Learn collage techniques and discover the joys of working small.



News Release

813 S. Atlantic Ave, Ocean City, MD 21842
End of the boardwalk, across from the Inlet Village

For immediate release:

Media contact: Christine

Okerblom

Curator

O: 410.289.4991 | @: Christine@ocmuseum.org

The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum has launched a new project called "Save Our Stories" and is asking community members to send in their accounts as to how COVID-19 has impacted them.

COVID-19 has affected everyone in different ways and each story that is submitted will help future generations understand how the pandemic changed our local community. Questions such as "How did news of the virus affect your summer vacation? Your school age child? Your local business or your everyday routine?" will help the Museum to gather a variety of perspectives and accounts. The submissions can be a specific experience, direct answers to the prompt questions, or a combination. No story is too long or too short.

The community's participation in this project plays a crucial role in the success of "Save Our Stories." "This is an opportunity for everyone's experience to be acknowledged and valued as what will be a piece of history," said Christine Okerblom, Museum Curator.

To submit, please visit the museum website – ocmuseum.org – and for additional information, contact Christine@ocmuseum.org.

Entry Fees:
\$25 - Individual
\$50 - Group

UWLES Presents

Holiday Mask-erade Contest



**Looks like we'll be wearing masks for at least another few months.
So why not have some fun with it?**

**Decorate your mask and enter it in the UWLES Mask-erade Contest!
Grab a generic mask (pleated disposable, KN-95, or cup style) and decorate it however
you wish, as long as it is still wearable.**

Submit a photo of someone wearing the mask no later than January 4, 2021.

Register as an individual or group at uwles.org/Masks

Proceeds will benefit United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore (UWLES) and the 40 agencies that UWLES funds.

Prize Categories

Kicking 2020 to the Curb (COVID/New Year Related)
Most Unique
Best Mask for Formal Attire
Best Up-cycle or Repurposing
Holiday (Valentine's, St. Patrick's, Easter)
People's Choice

How To Vote For Your Favorite

**From January 5 - January 13 all submitted masks will
be shown online at
uwles.org/Masks or bidpal.net/UWLESMasks
\$1 per vote - and the mask with the most votes - WINS!**



United Way of the
Lower Eastern Shore