

Times-Press

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The Largest-Selling Paper On The Maryland Coast

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Inside an incubation unit, the first child born at Atlantic General Hospital is rushed to a helicopter for a life-saving flight to St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore. (See story, photos beginning on page 16.)

New in Olde Towne

Trolley route gets on track

By Charlotte Hale
Staff Writer

Trolley rides along a newly established route through Ocean City's downtown are scheduled to begin Friday, May 28, in an attempt to give businesses in that area more exposure.

The trolley, which is actually a bus with an ornate exterior, will depart at the top of every hour from the south train station in the inlet parking lot and run in a loop through downtown. It will arrive back at the station by 30 minutes after the hour to begin another run.

The municipal bus system's dollar-a-day fare will apply to the trolley, City Manager Dennis Dare said. Anyone who has already purchased a bus ticket may use it to board the trolley for free, while those who hop aboard the trolley

Continued on Page 5

Exploding into action

Early opening, birth mark AGH's day one

By Sean O'Sullivan
Staff Writer

Somewhere around 9:15 a.m., a little over an hour after Atlantic General Hospital opened its doors Friday morning, and after three people had already been checked into the emergency room, the hospital's public address system struggled to life:

"Testing, one, two, three, testing."

The sound was deafening. State Delegate Bennett Bozman, who stopped by to visit the institution he helped bring to life, observed that the system worked fine, they just needed to adjust the volume.

That was pretty much the feeling all around Atlantic General — everything worked on the first day of operation for Worcester County's first hospital, but some of it needed a little fine tuning.

The atmosphere up and down the corridors was like opening night at a Broadway play. Some 150 employees have been rehearsing for months, and Friday everyone was eager to show that they knew their lines. They didn't have to wait long.

At 7:20 a.m., 40 minutes before the hospital was to officially open, an ambulance from Berlin pulled up to the emergency room entrance.

The patient reported having trouble breathing and insisted that he be taken to AGH, rather than to Peninsula Regional Medical Center. Though he was told the hospital wasn't yet open,

the man said he would rather wait than take the 30-minute drive to Salisbury.

Subsequently, the hospital took its first emergency room case a little early and the man was admitted as the first patient. At the end of the day, he was reported to be in stable condition.

AGH had its first "walk-in" patient when a man limped through the emergency entrance looking for someone to examine his knee. Friday was full of firsts.

In the radiology department,

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Eyes & ears

ring inks

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t see made."

Hats off to the prez

Ocean City garnered at least subliminal national media attention last Thursday, when a front page picture on *The Washington Post* and at least one television network showed President Clinton arriving on Capitol Hill holding the white baseball cap included in a gift package from the resort.

Unfortunately, the Ocean City logo was hard to make out.

As reported last week, Sen. Barbara Mikulski presented the hat to Clinton, who, in turn, plopped it on his head as depicted in the photograph below, where the resort's name is easier to see.



Ribbon redux

At last week's ribbon cutting for Atlantic General Hospital, at least one citizen beat political and hospital dignitaries to the punch.

A half hour before everyone lined up for the cameras, one woman tried to take a short cut through the arch where the baby blue ribbon was strung. She didn't quite clear it, and unintentionally dedicated the hospital.

Quick-thinking hospital workers, however, tied the ribbon back together before the ceremonies concluded.

The hole story

When Ocean Pines Association Director Molly Starr asked how work on the Ocean Pines Wastewater Treatment facility expansion was progressing, District Engineer Jim Caldwell offered to give her a tour of the construction site.

"There's a big hole with a lot of concrete," he said.

"It's one of nicer holes we have," added Worcester County Sanitary Commission member Jeff Mumford.

Shedding some 'light'

After watching the number of signatures grow on the petition protesting Worcester County's proposed \$2.1 million bond for the purchase of Lighthouse Sound, County Commissioner Jeanne Lynch hinted this week that a press release might be issued soon to dispel "misinformation."

As a patient?

Though Gov. William Donald Schaefer couldn't make it to the Atlantic General Hospital ribbon cutting, Dr. Jim D'Orta, AGH's acting director of emergency medicine, reports that the governor said he would visit the facility on Memorial Day weekend.

Turf and Turf: Cross-country for Charity



The Coast-to-Coast for Kids jet ski team left Long Beach, N.Y. last Thursday and traveled through four other cities before arriving Monday in Ocean City, Md., where it is expected to stay for a few days. So far, they have jet skied approximately 860 miles.

Cyclist Bob Derbyshire should be arriving in Albuquerque, N.M. today, Thursday, concluding an 80-mile trek from Grants, N.M. He recently peddled through the petrified forest and the painted desert.

Weekend Weather:

Showers Friday, becoming sunny and mild Saturday and Sunday with highs in the mid-70s, lows in the mid-to-upper 50s.

Population:

There were 156,215 people in Ocean City this past weekend, according to Demolish population estimates. This compares to 259,212 people for the same weekend last year (Memorial Day holiday).



Atlantic General Hospital President William Donatelli unlocks the hospital's front door Friday morning for the first day of operation.

Seen O'Sullivan/Times-Press



Alexandra Orier/Times-Press

Two operating room technicians unpack supplies in preparation for opening day.

Day One: AGH springs into life

Continued from Page 1

LuAnn Siler from the respiratory department, which was swamped from the 7:20 a.m. arrival until the premature birth at 4:30 p.m., summarized her first day at AGH by saying that the anticipation was much worse than the work itself.

When the problems arose, people instinctively responded. "Today was busy, but it was easier than yesterday," she said. technicians talked excitedly about having done their first patient X-ray, and one hallway over a lab supervisor displayed the results of the department's first test results.

The featured cafeteria lunch for the hospital's first day of business was tacos.

Everywhere, people in groups of two seemed to be hunched over keyboards of various shapes and sizes making last-minute adjustments to data

bases, heart monitor machines and even the new air conditioning system.

Maintenance men were checking phones, doing touch-up work, labeling lockers, installing locks, fixing flooring or just vacuuming the seemingly immaculate carpet.

Of course, service representatives couldn't be everywhere at once. One early morning ride on a hospital elevator had to be aborted because the lift was being uncooperative, a doctor was heard to complain about a dictation machine and a motion sensor on an automatic door had to be adjusted.

In the cafeteria, employees had to give change from a small metal box because the cash register was still waiting to be programmed.

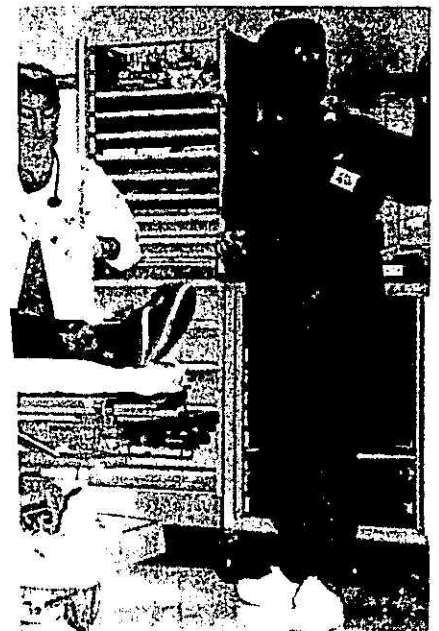
Pharmacy Director Patrick Lam said his department was a zoo, but it was coming together. "Today it really feels like a hos-

pital," he said.

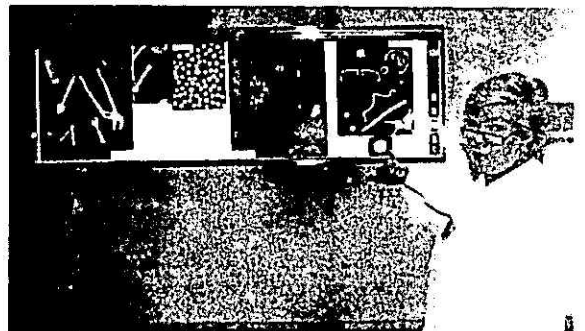
Every inch of the building and every piece of equipment literally shined with the glow of a freshly unwrapped package, and while the staff was composed of seasoned professionals, they all were bubbling over with the enthusiasm of medical school graduates.

Before the end of the day, the staff faced its first real emergency: A Berlin woman, going through premature labor, was rushed to AGH, though AGH is not a maternity hospital (see accompanying story).

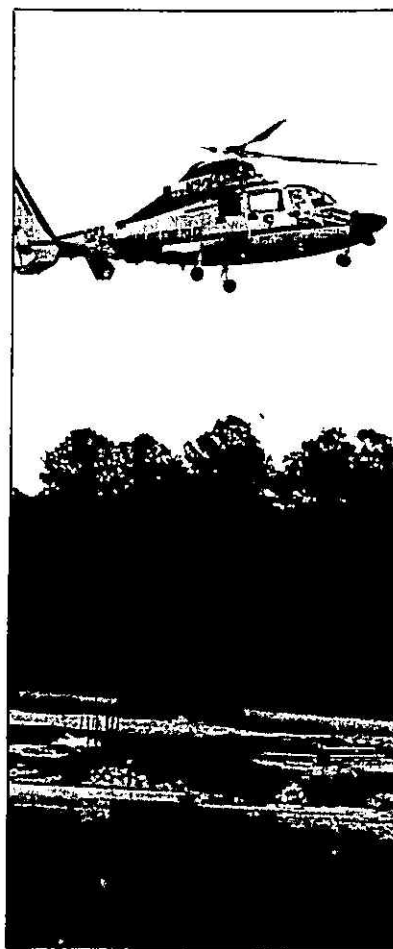
By the close of the business day Friday, 33 people had been treated at the hospital and three were admitted as patients. AGH President William Donatelli, however, noted that though 5 p.m. was the close of the day, it was not the close of the hospital, which will be in continuous operation from now on.



Emergency room staffers at Atlantic General Hospital attend to the first patient admitted Friday.



A member of Atlantic General's radiology department shows the results of test runs of the hospital's X-Ray equipment on opening day. The second image from the right is a telephone.



Life begins on first day

Premie born at AGH

By Sean O'Sullivan
Staff Writer

One unexpected first in a day full of firsts at Atlantic General Hospital was the birth of a baby boy.

Although AGH is not supposed to receive maternity cases, a Berlin woman pregnant with twin boys was thrust on the hospital late Friday, its first day of operation.


During an at-home visit by a nurse, Susan Whaley went into premature labor and an ambulance was summoned. Her fiancé, Leon Briddell, said she was not due for at least two months.

Shortly after Susan Whaley gave birth to a boy at AGH, a helicopter was summoned to rush him to the neonatal unit in Baltimore. Above, staff members carefully put the child, in an incubator, on the aircraft. At left, the father, Leon Briddell, waits nervously.

Continued on Page 18

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Boy's birth among firsts for hospital

Continued from Page 17

At approximately 4:30 p.m., Whaley gave birth to a 3-pound baby boy in AGH's operating room. While the event was unexpected, the hospital was not unprepared, and its incubation unit helped the staff keep the child alive.

Berlin Fire Department Chief Phil Simpson said the boy probably would not have had the chance at life if the ambulance had to go to Salisbury. "You've got a hospital that turned out to be in the right place," he said.

A short while later, Whaley was taken to Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury and a helicopter was summoned to take "Baby A" to the statewide neonatal unit at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore.

Though the Maryland State Police helicopter touched down in the hospital's parking lot at about 5:30 p.m., the AGH staff waited almost an hour and a half before moving the baby in order to stabilize his condition before the long flight north.

During the wait, Bridell, who had been a bricklayer at the hospital during its construction, commented, "I didn't know I'd be here this soon."

He paced the halls like the expectant father he was. "This is the hard part, the waiting. ... I'm nervous, I'm shaking," he said. Bridell wanted to see his son off before he headed to Salisbury to meet with the mother.

At approximately 6 p.m., an AGH staffer told Bridell that the second son, weighing 2 pounds, 15 ounces, was born at PRMC. He too was sent to St. Agnes.

Rather than have his sons continue to be known as "Baby A" and "Baby B," Bridell decided to call the twins Leon and Leone.

St. Agnes spokesman George Moniodis reported Monday that the twins remained in guarded condition, which is standard in premature birth cases. If all goes well, Moniodis said the children could be released in a month.

After the delivery, AGH President William Donatelli beamed like a father. "I was impressed with the staff and their handling of a real, critical emergency."

"Between the admissions (of three patients) and the birth ... there is not much else we can have," he observed.

Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires.



Swimming in it

Northside Aquatics Center Committee Chairman Mark Fritschle (left) accepts a \$2,000 check from Treasurer of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Art Hiltch. The money will help fund a feasibility and marketing study that will address the needs of the community and the ways in which an aquatics center may be funded. For information call 250-0125.

Local youths rescue turtles

Eight northern diamondback terrapins were rescued from an unattended crab pot by two local boys playing on the beach at the Bayside Pony Farm on Sunday.

Hale Harrison, 11, and Michael Mann, 12, noticed the crab pot in shallow water. Inside were four baby and four large live sea turtles, examined and identified by the Assateague Information Center.

Though the law states that crab pots should be checked every 24 hours by their owners, the trap had been unattended for several weeks. Sea turtles can survive only 12 hours without air, the park ranger said, and Harrison and Mann were commended for the rescue.

The turtles were revived to good health and set free into the bay by the boys.



Michael Mann (left) and Hale Harrison with the diamondback terrapins they rescued from a crab pot on Sunday.

Grieger, Everett d

Award-winning painters Lois Grieger and Lillie M. Everett will exhibit their works at the Art League of Ocean City gallery on 94th Street from May 31 through June 27.

Both Grieger and Everett paint in the old masters style, done realistically in watercolors, oils and graphics. Their works are coveted by both experienced collectors as well as the general public.

Both artists have exhibited in notable museums. Grieger's work has been displayed at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Peale, the Frick and the Smithsonian Institution. Works by Everett have most recently been on view at the Maryland Arts Council in Baltimore, the Art Guild of Maryland

and the Veehoff Galleries in Arlington.

The two Baltimore recipients of many of the top prizes of the contest today. Grieger received first prize in the regional Maryland Art League

Business

Area business leaders agreed to be locked up at the Counsel Hotel on June 10 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. To obtain release, participants in the Ocean City must raise \$250 in cash. In custody, jailbirds served a "bread and water

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